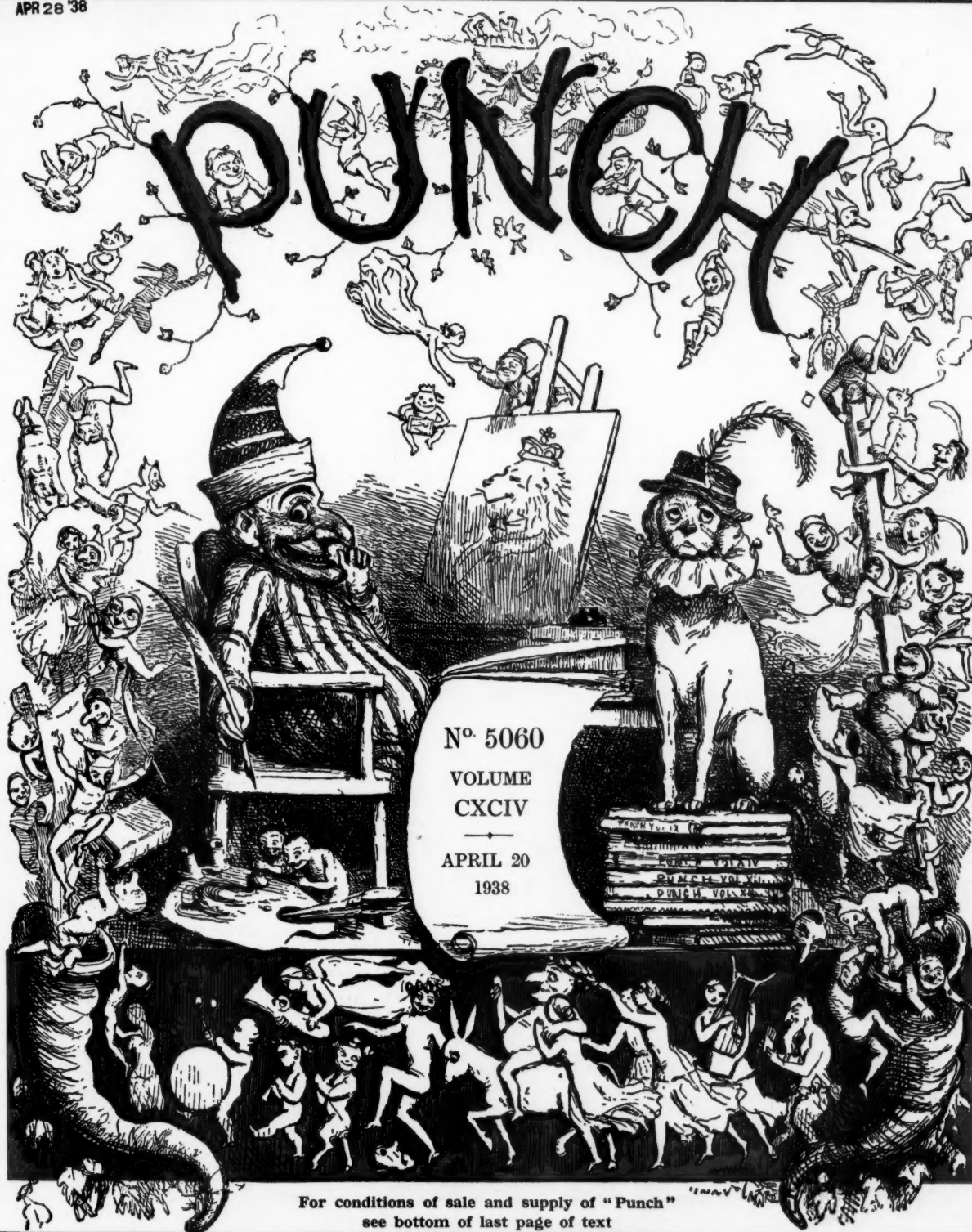


HUNTLEY & PALMERS OSBORNE BISCUITS

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prevent Afternoon Fatigue

APR 28 '38



For conditions of sale and supply of "Punch"
see bottom of last page of text



Player's Please



Quality



QUALITY first . . . that is the guiding principle in the manufacture of 'Ovaltine.' Upon its supreme quality and unrivalled nutritive properties millions of people rely for health and fitness.

The whole 'Ovaltine' organisation reflects the exceptional steps taken in the interests of 'Ovaltine' quality. The 'Ovaltine' Factory is acknowledged to be "the ideal of what a food factory should be." The 'Ovaltine' Dairy Farm, with its prize-winning Jersey Herd, and the 'Ovaltine' Egg Farm, extending over 350 acres, are amongst the most up-to-date and scientifically conducted farms in existence.

Thus the highest standards of quality and purity are ensured for the ingredients of 'Ovaltine.' The finest barley malt extract, the purest of milk and the freshest of new-laid eggs are combined by exclusive scientific processes. The result is a complete tonic food which contains every nutritive element required to build up perfect fitness of body, brain and nerves.

For all these reasons 'Ovaltine' stands in a class alone for quality and health-giving value. And as quality is all-important where health is concerned, make 'Ovaltine' the regular daily beverage for every member of your family.

'OVALTINE' *Supreme for Health*

Prices in Great Britain and
N. Ireland, 1/1, 1/10 & 3/3

All
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Quality

The 'Ovaltine' Dairy Farm with
its renowned herd of prize-
winning Jersey Cows.

The 'Ovaltine' Egg Farm
extending over 350 acres and with
accommodation for 100,000 birds.



The 'OVALTINE' FACTORY
in a Country Garden

Charivaria

A BOX was recently found at a London terminus with a hammer and sickle painted on it in red. It was taken of course to the Left Luggage Office.

★ ★ ★

"To Mr. and Mrs. —, of Kensington, on the 2nd inst. a bonny son. Both well. Thanks to God, nurse, mother and Mrs. Jones."—*Cape Town Paper*.
What about Father?

★ ★ ★

"I bought some — fertilizer and my flowers came up in a week," says a writer to a daily paper. We bought a — cat and ours came up in a night.

★ ★ ★

In political circles it is being said that French Premiers when they resign now put a notice on their doors, "Back Again in Ten Minutes."



King's Cross station. He could hardly have expected it to go right through.

★ ★ ★

A correspondent says he loves to watch the golfers at Wimbledon. Every stroke is a bit out of the common.

★ ★ ★

German Papers Please Copy

"At the Strand Sale Rooms this week, on Thursday, at 2 p.m., will be held the first of the 'William H. Crocker' Auctions, comprising British Colonies in Africa."

Philatelic Advt. in "The Times."

★ ★ ★

The most important clue in a new mystery play is a doorpost. The plot hinges upon it.

VOL. CXCIV

LEFT
LUGGAGE
OFFICE



According to one essayist, paying a bill is a real tonic. Ten thousand doctors enthusiastically recommend it.

★ ★ ★

"He had to be struck over the head with a baton before he could be brought to his senses," the Fiscal said of a man who was fined £5 or 30 days at Glasgow Central Police Court yesterday."

Glasgow Paper.

Similarly, a door has to be shut before you can open it.

★ ★ ★

"A dip in the sea is a fine stimulant for the nippers," says a holiday note. Ask the nearest crab.

★ ★ ★

A motorist says that when travelling through the New Forest at Easter a squirrel followed him for miles. It is presumed that it had only just heard the old joke about picking up the nuts.

★ ★ ★

An architect says he cannot resist twisting stairways. Tough guy, huh?

★ ★ ★

A solicitor's clerk complains that on the top-floor of a London building it took him ten minutes to find the lift. And that of course got him down.

★ ★ ★

"You Britishers don't get out nearly often enough," declares an American. Perhaps he had better wait until he has seen the Test scores.

★ ★ ★

"WANTED. Woman to cook and also do some charring."

Advt. in Hunts Paper.

Not, of course, simultaneously.

★ ★ ★

Policemen who surprised a burglar in a London flat found him sitting by a rifled safe listening to the wireless weather report. He was no doubt waiting to hear if the coast was clear.



R



Tourist. "PARDON ME, BUT WHY IS THE BELL RINGING?"
Rustic. "'Cos I'm PULLIN' THIS 'ERE ROPE."

"I'll Run You Home"

I HAVE only myself to blame; I was a fool to expect the truth from anyone after a golf-club dinner. Limberleg distinctly said he would run me home in his car, and his wife said it would be a pleasure—and then they abandon me in this dickey-seat with spanners swirling round my feet and a whirlwind practising haystack-lifting round my head. But what can one say to one's kind friends? Thank you, but I have my tricycle outside. No, thank you, I haven't ridden in an automobile since the Mafeking Night celebrations in South Kensington. No, one can only smile bravely and hope that one's benefactors are not thought-readers.

I should like to have a word with the inventor of this Arctic afterthought. Just one word—and then some quick work with a blunt instrument. Who was he, anyway? Why couldn't he keep to nice homely inventions like the rack and the thumb-screw?

So Limberleg's wife wouldn't dream of me travelling home by train, wouldn't she? She will have a nightmare if she dreams about the agonies I am enduring in the name of friendship. And while we're on that subject, which misguided poet said that "Friendship is a sheltering tree"? Sheltering tree my eye!

Look at the pair of them! They are probably glowing inwardly at the thought of being Good Samaritans. Well, if being a Good Samaritan gives one an inward glow I must be Public Enemy Number One. No, that's wrong, for if I were I should be taking them for a ride.

If I draw my head down into my coat I knock my hat off. If I hold my hat on a National Mark hurricane streaks up my sleeve and stabs me in the small of the back. Surely there is a rug somewhere? Oh, yes, inside the car. That's

right, wrap yourselves up well. I don't want to be the cause of any coldness between husband and wife. I don't want the rug—far be it from me. See, little brother, those fortunate mortals in that better and brighter world beyond this small pane of glass. They can smoke cigarettes without having them blown into their hair.

My ears are frozen solid. I don't suppose I could feel anything if I pinched them. I can't! I am pinching desperately and I cannot feel the slightest sensation. Gone, and they never said "Farewell"! Grim Find in Country Lane. Unattached Blue Ears Mystify Police. The Abominable Snowman Again? No, I'm wrong—my tiny hand is frozen and I am unable to tell the difference between my ear and my coat-collar.

Freeze a jolly good fellow. I'm the original cool cucumber; I'm BUCHAN's cold spell personified. If winter comes can spring be far behind? No, there is no spring far behind in this car. There weren't even any shock-absorbers until I came.

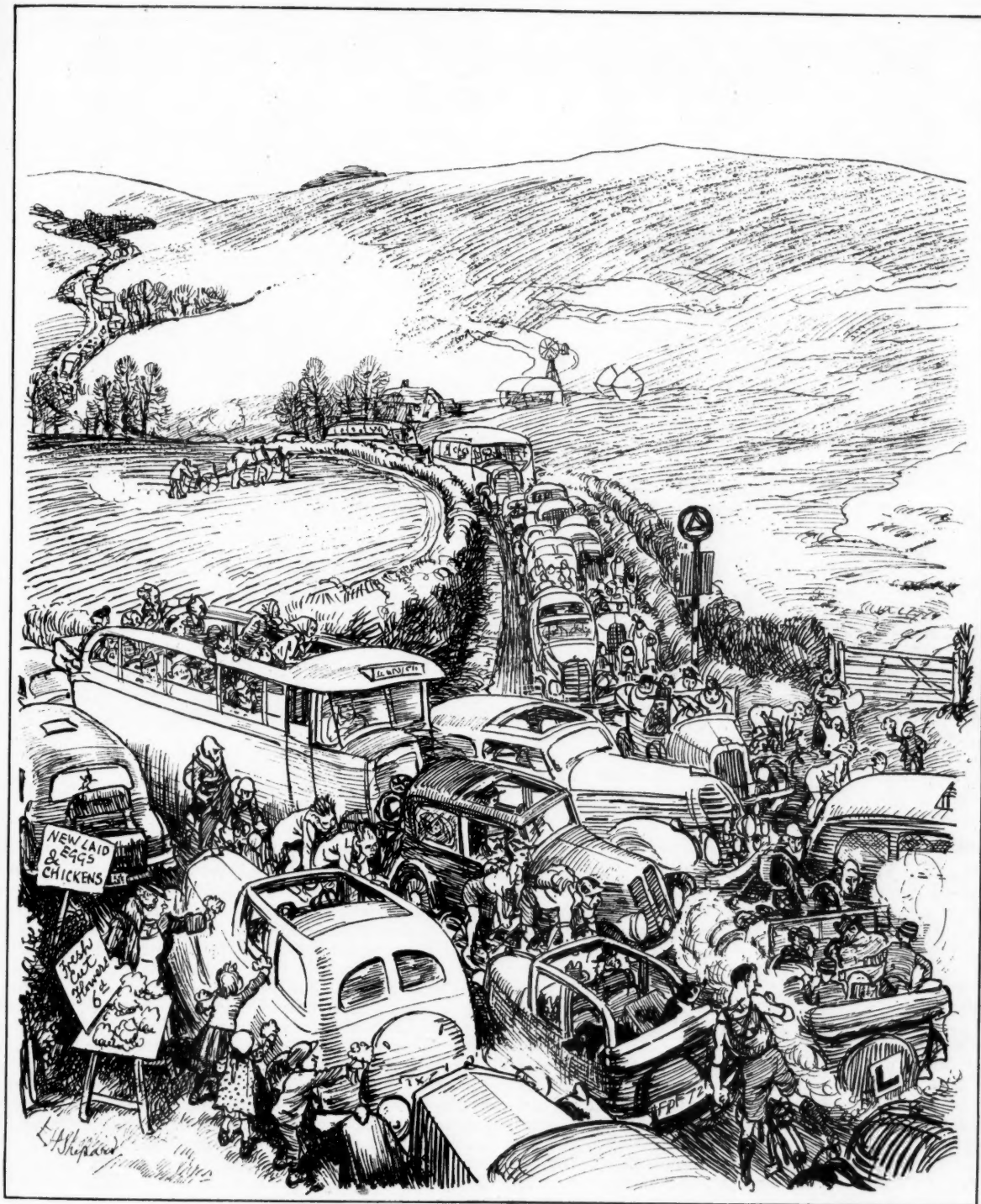
Here comes the rain. It is chasing after me and stinging me in the back of the neck. Well, *le déluge* is certainly *après moi*. Well, well, fancy meeting you, Madame de Pompadour! It's something new for you to take a back-seat, isn't it? I'm not certain that I want you beside me—you know how people talk. What's this I hear about you and La Pompadour? Oh, that; we had a wild ride in the back of a car the other night, that's all. She just sat and soliloquised about Louis. Quinze, of course, not Joe. Do you know him?—a little fellow, good at French but inclined to panic. Most of his family completely lost their heads during the French steel slump. I shall lose my feet if those spanners continue to buffet them. Well, one must suffer tools gladly.

I must look on the bright side. I must take the rough with the smooth—but how can I while the devoted Limberleg is steering the course of true love? I'm just another golfer in the rough. Life is what you like to make it. Yes, what you like to make it, whoever you are. If you want to be helpful you can tell me how to wring out an opera-hat.

Well, this will bring the roses to my cheeks. If only Mr. MIDDLETON could see me now! March winds and April showers bring forth May flowers. They probably brought

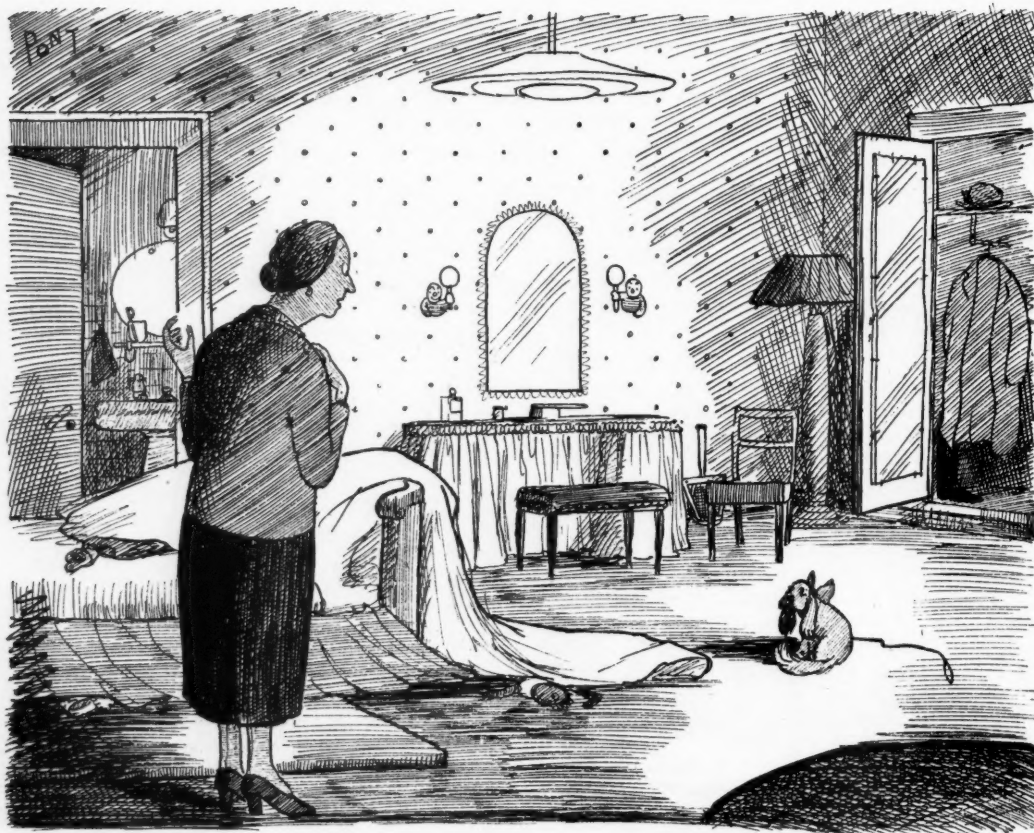


"DON'T KEEP NAGGING, DEAR; EVERYTHING WILL BE PUT BACK EXACTLY AS IT WAS."



HOLIDAYS

"I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky."



THE BRITISH CHARACTER

THE TENDENCY AMONG WEEK-END GUESTS TO LEAVE THINGS BEHIND

forth *The Mayflower*. Yes, the Pilgrim Fathers left England during the rain of James the First. They went in search of dry land and landed in America instead. Still, no American could be in a worse state than the one I'm in.

I suppose I could curl up on the floor and shut the lid over me. I should be discovered months later by an inquisitive garage-hand. I 'ate to 'ave to mention it, Sir, but there's a deceased gent in the dickey. Oh, look, darling, *that's* where he got to!

Drowned in the dickey-seat! All the events of my past life flash before my watery eyes. There was the time I was sat on by a tired horse, the time the car blew up and burnt my hair off, the time— Ah, those happy, happy bygone days!

The Happy Pair are laughing now, bless them! Well, it is dry humour anyway. Go ahead, have a good time—you've put all your trouble behind you. They are still laughing. I have probably missed one of the best jokes of the century. Well, it is nice to think that I shall die with a smile on their lips.

I will sing snatches of old songs to keep my spirits up. "Tell me where is fancy bred, in the heart—" And, talking

of fancy bread, what couldn't I do to a plateful of *croissants* and some hot coffee? Well, I couldn't hang it on the wall, shave with it, take it for a walk— You see? That's what comes of answering rhetorical questions when one is in a low state. But how can I think properly while that mudguard continues to throw cold water on my ideas?

In every house we pass people are sleeping in warm beds. And all that mighty heart is lying still—and that goes for you too, Limberleg, as you sit inside there talking to your wife. Hans Andersen and the Brothers Grimm must writhe with envy every time you talk about golf.

If ever I get out of this alive I shall write a strong letter to *The Times* protesting against insidious political propaganda: every few hundred yards there is a notice exhorting me to "Keep Left." My vote at the next Election goes to the party that will stop Glorious Isolation by declaring dickey-seats null and void, and will show consideration for the Have Nots.

Well, I am home at last. In twenty minutes I shall be in bed, and in three months' time I may be strong enough to get up for a short time each day.

"I dote doe how to thagg you, old bad. I'll do the sabe for you wud of these days. Good-dight."

Notes from America

The Remarkable Horse

FAR to the east of the Statue of Liberty, down where Brooklyn meets the sea, three cities stand upon the strand, each gay as it can be. That, you will notice, is poetry. The cities are Coney Island, Luna Park and Steeplechase, but the greatest of these is Coney Island. (You needn't look for any more poetry; there won't be any.) Everything in Coney Island is made of pasteboard and is designed solely for the amusement of the American people. It is a city which rings constantly with the laughter of children. It boasts a population composed of forty-seven nations, it covers double the area of Ancient Babylon, and it burns down twice a year.

As a child I had quite a passion for Coney Island and insisted on being taken there every summer. I preferred going on Sunday because the crowds were thickest then. The things I remember most vividly are the flying chairs, the Remarkable Horse, and a roller-coaster called the Tornado. The flying chairs were small metal seats attached by a dog-chain to a framework about thirty feet high. At a given signal the framework would begin to revolve and centrifugal force would swing the chairs out at an angle of about forty-five degrees. In addition to forcing all the blood to your feet the chairs would sometimes develop a cranky circular motion which, combined with their incredible velocity, frequently made the passengers feel a little queer. This was evidently part of the fun, for we used to alight pale and shaken, and immediately tell our friends in hoarse whispers what a glorious time we had had.

The Remarkable Horse (that wasn't its real name) was advertised by a barker as "an astounding freak of nature, with its head where its tail ought to be." The admission was ten cents (about fivepence), and you were led into a show-room where a perfectly ordinary horse was standing in a stall. After enough people had been collected and were standing perplexedly, waiting for the monster to be brought in, the barker appeared and turned the horse around in his stall. "There you are," he said, "his head where his tail ought to be," and here a great wail would go up from the crowd. Then the game was to come out pretending that you *had* seen "an astounding freak of nature," and induce your friends to go in; and so the game would continue, the Remarkable Horse

earning enormous amounts daily, and a great deal of laughing being done all round.

The Big Event of the day was the Tornado. It was plastered all over with signs announcing that it was the highest, fastest, most thoroughly terrifying roller-coaster in existence, capable of one-hundred-and-twenty miles an hour and all hats must be checked before getting on board.

The prospective passenger sat in a sort of miners' car, waiting nervously for the fun to begin. Then all at once the little train moved slowly out of its shed and started to the top of an enormous incline. On the way up women laughed shrilly and little boys stood up to show they were not afraid. Once there the train seemed to pause for an awful instant, and you could look down into the abyss ahead. At this moment everyone fell silent, and the little boys sat down.

What happens next is hard to recall clearly. A terrible roar fills the air and your vision seems to flicker and grow confused. The women begin screaming again and several objects from the cars ahead are blown out and go flying past like escaping birds. Then gradually the turns grow less steep and the hills less precipitous, until at last you run tamely back into the shed. Here all the little boys jump out and buy another ticket and the man who had refused to check his hat goes out to hunt for it under the tracks, and so it goes.

The food at Coney Island is, like all American food, amazingly standardised. It is exactly the same as any you can buy along the highway, for it

consists mostly of hamburger. Hamburger, the invention of a thrifty butcher, who conceived it during the Siege of Paris, is made by grinding up the skin of a cow with red pepper and boiling the result in linseed-oil. It is generally served with a large onion folded into the sandwich, and the effects of it upon our breaths, our digestions and our national character are without doubt incalculable.

Hamburger is often washed down with a green liquid known as soda. For some reason this comparatively harmless stuff has acquired a terrible reputation, particularly a brand whose initials are cc. cc was (and still is, for that matter) said to contain small amounts of some dangerous drug, the idea being to build up a craving for it in little children who go to the circus. Aside from the fact that this fiendish scheme would be ruinously expensive, it is quite unnecessary, since little children who go to the circus generally have insatiable thirsts to begin with. It seems odd to me that a nation which eats hamburger should look with suspicion on anything so innocuous as pop.

* * * * *

Now that I have grown older I frequently become rather indignant about Coney Island. I realise how vulgar and unwholesome it is and how dreadfully it saps the vitality of our youth. I look at it sociologically. And the next time it catches fire I am going to write to my paper and suggest that nobody put it out. It is time that something was done about Coney Island.



ANTONY AND COLEOPTERA

Misleading Cases

What is a Dog Race?

Rex v. Benevolent Greyhounds, Ltd., Coates and Others

At the Old Bailey to-day Mr. Justice Plush delivered judgment in the dog-race case.

He said: "In this delightful but difficult case the principal defendants are the occupiers of a greyhound-racing-track, and Mr. Coates and his three hundred companions are book-makers.

"They are charged with offences against Section Four of the Betting and Lotteries Act, 1934.

"By that wise and clearly-drafted section it is ordained as follows:—

'Betting by way of bookmaking or by way of a totalisator shall not take place on any day on a track being a dog race-course in connection with more than eight dog races, and betting by way of bookmaking or by means of a totalisator on the results of dog races shall not take place on any day on such a track as aforesaid except during one continuous period not exceeding four hours.'

"The Sovereign Parliament, it will be seen, has here presented its customary face to the vicious indulgences of the people. Betting on the dog races is not commended, but, like the consumption of beer, may be permitted in carefully regulated doses. There may be betting, under another section, on 104 days only, or roughly one week-day in every three. That betting must be concerned with eight races only and must be enjoyed, as it were, in a single continuous draught of four hours, and no more. In other words, betting is not permitted at more than one race-meeting on the same day, although that day be one of the 104; and if the races exceed in number the magic figure of eight there must be no betting on the residue.

"The evidence is—and it was not contradicted—that the defendant company, in addition to their evening meetings, have been and are still holding what I may call *matinée* meetings, at which betting has taken place. The citizens of the surrounding area have thus been demoralized beyond the limits of demoralization wisely prescribed by the Legislature; and the rival proprietors of dog race-courses, duly obeying the law, have suffered an undue disadvantage.

"But now I have to ask myself, What is a dog race-course? And that leads inevitably to the second question, What is a dog race?

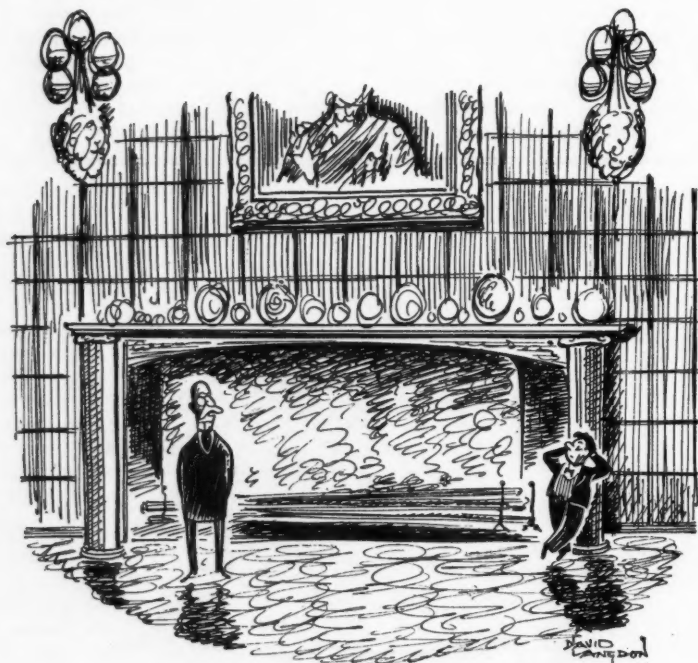
"At first sight it would seem an easy task to define a dog race. It is a speed-contest for dogs, won by that dog which reaches first a specified objective. It may be a running race or a walking race, a hurdle race or an obstacle race; it may be provoked by friendly rivalry or the desire for food. But neither the methods nor the motives of the competitors are essential to the definition, nor are they relevant to the intention of the Legislature; that is, if I understand the intention of the Legislature rightly, and of that, alas! no judge is ever sure. Unfortunately the Sovereign Parliament has seen fit to define a dog race with sharp and, as I think, needless particularity. By Section 20 a

"dog race" means a race in which an object propelled by mechanical means is pursued by dogs, and "dog race-course" shall be construed accordingly.'

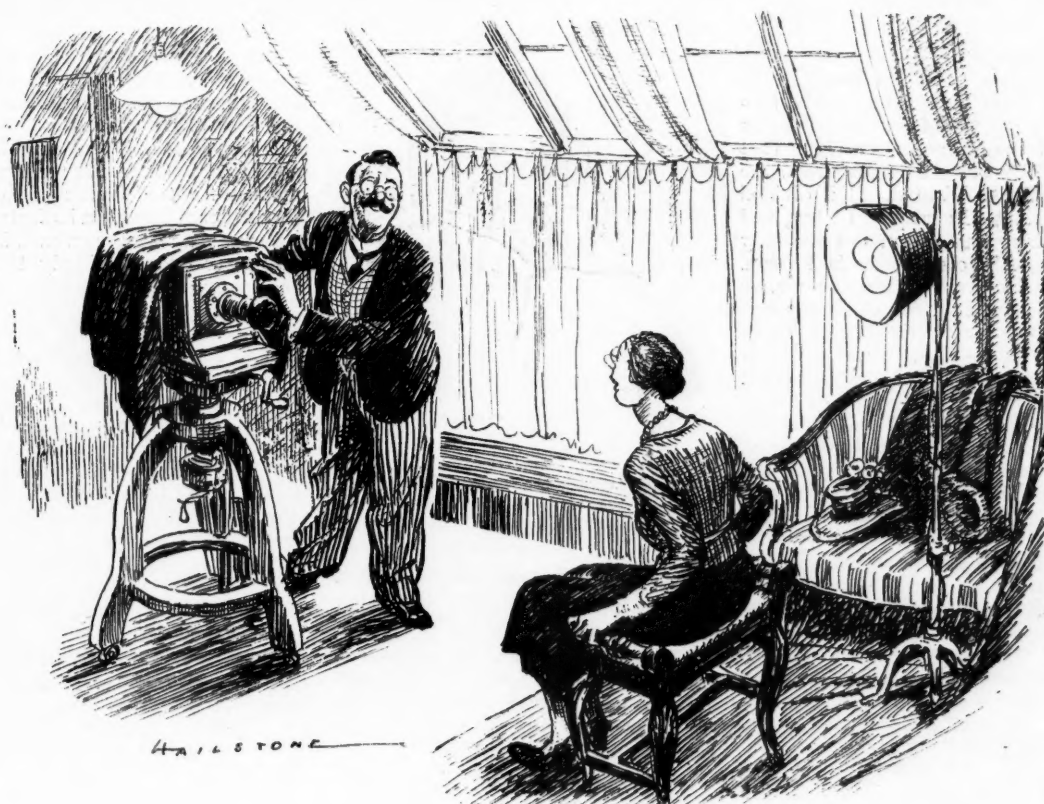
"It will be perceived at once that these words exclude from the operation of the Act some very large classes of doggy rivalry which by ordinary men would be described as 'dog races.' Some dogs, I understand, much beloved in Lancashire, decline to exert themselves in competition unless a dirty towel with a familiar smell is agitated by their owner at the far end of the track. Others, insensible to such allurements, will eagerly pursue together a cat or rabbit. Others, who can look upon a cat unmoved, are roused to energy and emulation by the throwing of sticks or stones into water. Others, again, as may be seen upon a country walk, will race together, without quarry or objective, in simple friendship or exuberance of spirit. A dog, in short, will run, or not, for as many reasons, and as good, as a man.

"*An object propelled by mechanical means.*" When learned counsel directed my attention to these words, sadly characteristic of our age though they are, I could not at first believe my eyes. I have seen a single dog giving chase to a motor-vehicle; but I attempted in vain to picture such a pursuit as the basis of an organised public spectacle. Later, in evidence, the early history of this affair restored my due respect for Parliament.

"The dogs, so-called, employed for the purposes of racing are invariably of the greyhound breed. These rapid and sagacious animals have long been pitted against each other, it appears, at coursing meetings in the pursuit of hares. To course a live hare in an



"I HARDLY WISH TO DISCOURAGE YOU, MY BOY, BUT I CAN'T SAY THAT I SEE ANY GREAT CHANCE OF YOUR CARVING OUT A CAREER EITHER AS A TRAM-DRIVER OR AS A FIREMAN."



"NEVER MIND, MISS, NOBODY ELSE NEED EVER SEE IT EXCEPT YOU AND ME."

enclosed space would be contrary to law; but when for the first time greyhounds were set to race in the arena it was thought necessary to provide the counterfeit of a hare; and this is 'the object propelled by mechanical means' (and indeed by electrical power).

"It is still not clear to me to what extent the exertions of the greyhounds have in fact depended on the provocative movements of a mechanical object some thirty yards ahead of them, from time to time emitting sparks and accompanied throughout by the whirr of trolley-wheels. If we respect, as we rightly do, the instinct of animals and in particular those wilder species of the dog tribe which bear the name of hound and are trained to the chase, we must assume that illusion, if it ever existed, must have been followed quickly by suspicion. When they have passed the post the sagacious animals are permitted for a few seconds only to maul the dead and dishevelled fur of the hare which has fallen from the mechanical

object. Few dogs, I think, after such a revelation and such a brief and hollow delight would by the same inducement be impelled to run again. Or, if they would, the instinct of animals and their appetite for blood must be less powerful than we supposed.

"Still, in the early stages of the enterprise, when the animals engaged were fresh, perhaps, from the genuine chase, the artifice may have served a purpose. But many years have passed: numerous generations of greyhounds have been introduced to the arena who never saw a real field or smelled a real hare. It was observed by the defendant company that the dogs showed increasingly less interest in the fur of the dead hare, and even if they did not enjoy a sniff at it ran with equal zest upon the next occasion. In other words, a breed of greyhounds has been evolved which races for the fun of the thing, as men, and even horses, do.

"The obvious experiment was made: races were run without the mechanical

object, and proved as fast and gratifying as before.

"The defendants therefore continued the practice; and they now claim that their operations, without the mechanical object, no longer fall within the definition of a dog race. I hold, with some reluctance, that they are right. They are now in the same position as a horse race-course, limited as to the number of days of racing but not as to the number of races upon those days. The prosecution is dismissed, with costs against the Crown.

"There is another charge relating to certain dates on which, according to the Crown, the racing, or rather the betting, was excessive, but the competitors were not dogs, but cheetahs. The cheetah, according to the evidence, is a member of the cat tribe. The Attorney-General asks me to say that, for the purpose of the Act, these cats are dogs. This I decline to do. I find, on the contrary, that these cats are horses: and accordingly this charge also is dismissed."

A. P. H.

Book Talk

THE Circulating Library which has my patronage sends me from time to time a little handbook—would brochure be right?—of New and Popular Books to assist me in compiling that bane of Library Assistants' lives, the List of Books Wanted. It is divided into sections—Biography, History and Archæology and so on, but the only part I really care about is Fiction. History and Archæology bore me, so do Sociology, Politics and Economics; so for that matter do Travel, Topography and Big-Game Hunting. Topography especially. I always used to cut my Topography lectures when I was a sophomore at Oxford. There is also a section devoted to Literature, Poetry, Drama and the Fine Arts, but I bar that kind of thing, I'm glad to say. One doesn't want to be affected, does one?

The Fiction List is always interesting. I make a practice of reading the brief descriptive paragraph which follows most of the titles, and I memorise as many as I can. This is a tremendous conversational aid at sherry parties, soirées, conversaciones and similar beanos when I find myself shored up against somebody who does not share my own fondness for talking about postage-stamps. I am able to discuss with them almost any recent novel. It is true that if they mention F. W. WESTAWAY'S *Obsessions and Convictions of the Human Intellect* (Philosophy and Psychology) I am dumb, and such a book as *Hawaiian Tapestry*, by ANTOINETTE WITHINGTON (Topography?) bowls me out completely; but give me Romance, Detection and the Wild West and I can hold my own with anyone. I have not, for instance, read *The Girl Who Dared*, by DAVID DURHAM, but I know that Jennifer Barlow agreed to save Ralph Gornston from financial ruin provided he married her, well knowing that Ralph was passionately in love with another girl, and I do not doubt the claim advanced by my pamphlet that what came of the experiment makes fascinating reading. So when I am asked if I have read *The Girl Who Dared*, I say, "Wasn't that about Jennifer Barlow and the fascinating experiment she made with the impecunious Ralph?" and possibly, if I have reached my third sherry, I add, "It reminded me in a way of BERTA RUCK'S *Wedding March*, in which, if you remember, Richard Richards, a bachelor at thirty-six, renounces the sea to marry a baby-faced girl and live the conventional



"OW MUCH D'YER FINK THEY'RE WORTH, BILL?"
"BAHT FIVE YEARS."

life of a man-about-town." After that I generally find I am at liberty to move off and talk to somebody else about Scarlet Malfrey, petite, blonde and self-willed, who never found her own level at school—Did she find it later in life? If you want to know, read *Grace Before Meat*, by SARA SEALE.

Sometimes I wonder whether authors can be altogether satisfied with the accounts given by my pamphlet of their best endeavours. When you have laboured for months at a book which you know, at the lowest estimate, to be a profound human document and a deep psychological study of a woman at bay, is it any comfort to see it described as "The story of Nancy, who nearly lost her husband through the machinations of a designing brunette"? Take *This Side of Regret*, by CLARISSA FAIRCHILD CUSHMAN. "Ann Couard," remarks the pamphlet, "a millionaire's daughter, almost wrecks her successful marriage to a chemistry professor through her attachment to an army officer." I can't believe that this is fair. There must be more in the book than that. If I were to describe *David Copperfield* as the tale of a little orphan who ran away to his aunt and married the Wrong Girl there would be a concerted outcry from the Dickens Club, the *Dickensian*, the League of Little Copperfields, the Old Pickwickians and a hundred more. Well, then, why doesn't somebody stand up for Miss CUSHMAN'S rights?

I am glad to see that there are plenty of "Westerns" in this list, though the

titles of some of them are a little slipshod. Strictly speaking, the word "gun" should appear in the title of any Wild West novel, if possible with "Two" in front of it. *Two-Gun Hanrahan* informs the reader at once of the kind of man with whom he has to deal. *Lawless Guns*, *Six-Gun Justice* and *Six-Gun Stampede* all get good marks in the present list. (It should perhaps be explained for the benefit of beginners that whereas *Two-Gun* indicates a man who wears a revolver on each hip, *Six-Gun Jake* does not imply that Jake habitually carries six weapons about his person. As far as I am aware four guns is the outside limit for fashionably-dressed rustlers and deputies, even in Texas, and of these only two must be visible; the other two of course are carried under the armpits.) I have no objection to *Range Rebellion*, *Range War in Squaw Valley*, or *Bullion on the Range*, and I rather like *One-Shot Marriott*, a pretty variation on the gun-theme. *Up From Texas* and *Girl From Texas* must pass, as must *Double-Cross Trail* and *Double-Cross Trails*, two somewhat similarly-named books by GEORGE B. RODNEY and CHRISTOPHER CULLEY respectively. But *Blood on the Sage*, *Pay-Off at Ladron* and *Parade of the Empty Boots* are far too unconventional. Broadminded readers may like the macabre suggestion of the last-named, but purists will have none of it. Play the game, LOUIS E. LEGNER, BENNETT FOSTER and CHARLES ALDEN SELTZER!

I could talk for a long time about the Detective Novels in this list, but I shall content myself with a list of the detectives, professional or amateur, whose names appear. Will anyone who thinks he really knows a lot about detective fiction lay his hand on his heart and swear he is on terms of intimacy with all these gentlemen—Bill Langley, Inspector Jackson, Colonel Coppe, Lieutenant Valcour, Anthony Bathurst, Detective-Inspector McCarthy, Evan Pinkerton, Inspector McClean, Christopher Bond, Mr. Pendlebury, Phineas Spinnet, Peter Clancy? Give the names of two or more cases in which each has been involved.

Bill Langley, by the way, if it helps you at all, has an "ineffable manservant" called Stokes. H. F. E.

Heil Moses!

"He [Herr HITLER] told the vast crowds who assembled to hear him that, sitting on the balcony, 'looking at this beautiful city, I felt like Moses contemplating the Promised Land.' . . . In a brief reply to addresses of welcome he referred to the coming exclusion of Jewish influence from the Salzburg Festival."—*The Times*.

Your Page!

WHEN I sat down at my desk this morning I thought: "Can it be true that the editor of *Punch* is going to let me have this page every week all to myself?" Then I threw down my pen and went to the window and looked down at one of London's great thoroughfares. I saw traffic passing by. I saw hundreds of decent lonely people walking there. And I had my answer. It isn't I who am going to have this page; it is you.

Just a plain man and his doggie—and YOU!

Will you forgive me if I'm deadly serious for a moment? I'm not a bit ashamed of being serious about serious things. I've seen so much and done so much and felt so much that I cannot help being terribly in earnest. Injustice, loneliness, women, suffering—these things seemed dreadful to me. I suppose it's because I'm more sensitive than most.

But, seriously, will you look on this page as your page and on me as your friend? I am, you know. I'm just the same as you people—a bit more sincere perhaps—more understanding; I don't know. But I do know that there's not a scrap of cynicism or nastiness in me—there isn't in any of us chaps who have pages in newspapers.

Of course if any of you pause to think—although after you've read my page regularly for a week or so I feel confident you'll give up thinking. You may say that there is a difference between you and me. You may say that I get paid for writing the page and you have to pay to read it. Now in my opinion between friends things like that *simply don't count*, and I for one don't worry about remarks of that kind because all I want to do is to give and give and give. And giving doesn't mean money—not with me, anyway. It means giving myself, utterly, on this page.

"What's that, old chap?"

Excuse me a moment, will you? My little dog (called "THE WHITESTMAN-KNOW"—Mr. White for short) has just come up to me and put a paw on my trouser-leg.

"What is it, Mr. White? You say readers will be sick if I go on writing like this? Well, I shouldn't be surprised; but they're a long-suffering lot. They're jolly good to me, Mr. White. And do you know, it's a funny thing, but I believe something is happening already."

All the world loves a journalist.

Yes, do you know, reader, that I believe you and I are becoming chums? I believe all the time I've been writing these topping remarks and you've been reading them we've been getting closer and closer to each other—beginning to see into one another's hearts and minds and understanding each other just that little bit more that makes all the difference.

I know I'm beginning to feel better for our chat, less cobwebs in my mind, less doubts about whether I am really giving every bit of myself to this page, more absolutely confident that what I am doing is worth doing.

Wading Along to Happiness

Friendship is wonderful. I think so, don't you? When times are bad and things look black—and don't I know how black they can look!—friendship is the silver lining that blows the clouds away; and when times are good isn't it grand to have a pal to share our happiness?

I don't mind confessing that I'm happy now—happy to think that every week from now on I'm going to sit down and drivel away on this page. Because it's not difficult, this kind of writing. It wells straight from the heart, and it doesn't matter what you

put—anything that comes into your head. And sometimes, when I'm awfully moved, do you know what I do? I don't use my head at all. I just pour the words out, and give and give and give.

Every week I shall be here, friends, in my corner.

It's so easy to be cynical.

There's not one of you who won't be welcome so long as you come with full hearts and empty minds. There's only one kind of person I'm not going to welcome, and that's that nasty cynical fellow who makes rotten remarks and sneers at us. Not that we care! We laugh! We're going to do a lot of laughing together, you and I. There's so much in this funny old world to laugh at; and if at times we cry—well, at least we're going to cry together. Ay! we're going to have many a good blub together. I know we are. Because we're friends, and we're going to share everything—laughter, and tears, and problems, and whimsies, and thoughts, and our little dogs, and everything.

Comrades, leave me here a little.

So don't forget a week from to-day. A week from to-day Mr. White and I will be here waiting for you, and longing, just longing, to help.



"HALF-A-POUND OF COD, MADAM? I THINK YOU HAVE A WRONG NUMBER."

Uncle Joe and Edmond Dantès

My Uncle Joe says that possibly it is a sign of a flaw in his character, but he cannot bring himself to settle down and listen deliberately, in the presence of others, to radio plays. Occasionally he has listened to one by himself, but unless he is by himself he cannot bear them, he says.

Aunt Susannah, aware of this peculiarity, turns down the volume when he is in the room and she herself wants to hear one. But—it is possibly a sign, he says, of a flaw in his character—when the personages of a radio play are murmuring quietly to Aunt Susannah, Uncle Joe, at the other side of the room, is filled with curiosity and cannot help straining his ears to find out what is going on.

He never does find out, of course, completely. For a minute or two at a time he will passionately want to hear, and for the next few minutes he will passionately want not to. As a result of this he usually gets a rough idea of the plot and a vague notion of some of the characters, while a few disconnected and quite unimportant fragments of dialogue burn themselves indelibly into his wincing brain.

Aunt Susannah listened intently, with her ear close to the loud-speaker, to nearly all the episodes of the recently-serialised *Monte Cristo*. Uncle Joe was frowning at his evening paper as far away from the loud-speaker as he could get, and all he seems to have grasped of *Monte Cristo* is one impassioned speech from one episode; but that he has grasped indeed. He knows it as well as the actor knew it. Possibly he's got it wrong, but he swears it went like this:—

"To Edmond Dantès, all who bear the name Morrel are never absent from his thoughts."



"HELLO! IS THAT THE EVENING SUN? I WANT TO CONSULT THE 'HEART PROBLEMS' EDITOR."

He tells me it devastated the rest of his evening, as I can well believe: it seems to have devastated the whole of every week since.

He began by trying to parse it. Soon he was trying *not* to parse it.

After this came the stage of ignoring the grammar and taking it literally. "All," Uncle Joe pointed out to me, "were *never* . . . The whole family, and he bore them constantly in mind. I kept getting a mental picture of the man's mind. It was like—it was like—thinking of similes gave me indigestion."

The next step appears to have been what Uncle Joe calls "changing the cast." With that sentence continually in his head he found himself applying it to everything. "To Neville Chamberlain," he would reflect, reading the paper, "all who bear the name Mussolini are never absent from his thoughts." This varied Uncle Joe's mental furniture somewhat, but bestowed on Signora Mussolini and the children an unwonted international significance. For that matter, it also bestowed on Mr. Chamberlain the aspect of a man of—to put it mildly—one idea. The most astonishing political implications resulted and Uncle Joe's views on important events began to assume strange colours.

Until, reading another part of the paper, he would find himself murmuring, "To Thomas Farr, all who bear the name Baer . . ."

"My mind," he told me solemnly, "was a hotbed of eccentricity. Not a department was safe."

It was a surprisingly long time before he began to be seriously troubled by efforts to put the original sentence right grammatically. But the period during which he was, I gather, proved to be the worst of all.

The natural way to begin the reconstruction was to say, "From Edmond Dantès' thoughts," but that was too sibilant. "From the thoughts of Edmond Dantès, all"—no, "none who bear the name Morrel are"—no, "is ever absent."

That was almost as bad, Uncle Joe thought. Grammatically unexceptionable perhaps (though he wasn't sure even of that), but literally just as peculiar a mess.

"Edmond Dantès always thinks—" No. Sounded like a line of verse, with a ribald rhyme coming.

"To Edmond Dantès, all who bear—" Uncle Joe knew he had passed this earlier and felt that he must be walking in a circle.

"All"—no, "Those who bear the name Morrel . . ." That be blown. What about namesakes, nothing to do with the family at all? Try "The Morrel family . . ." But that had an American ring. As if something were on the way about "the Morrel home," with Philo Vance and Markham and Van Dine walking up the drive swinging their sticks, and Detective Snitkin blundering about in the library and sullenly failing to grasp the significance of the corpse's previous interest in the work of Cézanne. . . .

In the end—"it was my last hope, in a way," he says—Uncle Joe consulted Aunt Susannah. He thought she might remember. He asked her gravely and with anxiety, in the hope that he might have misheard and that she might be able to clear everything up, whether a few weeks ago one of the characters in *Monte Cristo* had really delivered himself of these words in this order: "*To Edmond Dantès, all who bear the name Morrel are never absent from his thoughts.*"

Probably, Aunt Susannah replied in a placid tone. "It would have fitted in the story," she said, "all right. You see, Edmond Dantès was—"

"I know the story," said Uncle Joe brokenly, and went away with the disintegrating sentence still in his head; where it is yet. And in mine. And now, I suppose, in yours.

R. M.

For Gunmen Only

SEVERAL well-known Very Rough-Shooting Correspondents assembled on April 9th to watch Miss WENDY HILLER, Mr. ROBERTSON HARE and Mr. ALFRED DRAYTON perform the opening ceremony at the attractive ground of the new Pinewood Gun Club, an off-shoot of Pinewood Country Club at Iver, Bucks.

This was done with exemplary courage. Three sitting clay pigeons were firmly lashed to a clothes-line about five yards from the official butt, and after a few sighting-shots and false starts with the safety-catch on, each of the birds was brought down. Should purists or the R.S.P.C.P. protest that the prey were thus denied a sporting chance, it must be remembered that there is good precedent for this. When the new President of the Royal and Ancient plays himself in he is only expected to hit a stationary ball pegged to the ground. There is never any nonsense at St. Andrews about taking it on the wing.

After this ritual slaughter was over and barrels had been warmed up with a practice fusillade the serious business began, a whole-day competition for which many guns had entered. Apart from the difficulty of giving as much as a twinge to the Bolting Rabbit, a clay pigeon bowled at lightning speed through a mass of whin set across the field of fire, and the utter impossibility (speaking for himself) of knocking out a single feather in the Double Rise, which consists of two clay pigeons whizzed away at the same moment and in different directions out of a kind of green dustbin twenty yards or so up the pitch, your Very Rough-Shooting Correspondent was mainly impressed by two things:—

(1) Trap-shooting is now treated with the solemnity only accorded in this country to the major pastimes. This is probably due to the fact that, there being no romance in the life of the clay-pigeon, he can be bombarded at any season. Not only were there competitors at Pinewood wearing international blazers, but many of them came to the firing-point carrying such an armful of weapons that one felt it one's duty to redirect them to the Centre Court. And what weapons! The racks during the lunch-interval looked so like the armoury of a museum that one half expected to see a label marked "Favourite fowling-piece of the Emperor Franz-Josef." There were no hammers, but there were ordinary side-by-sides, there were over-and-



Tailor. "I'M GIVING YOU A SUGGESTION OF WAIST AT THE BACK, SIR, BUT NOT IN THE FRONT."

unders, there were sinister Chicagoan single-barrel repeaters, and there was every gauge known to man. One overheard snatches of conversation like this: "It's a trick of light, of course, but I don't seem able to get 'em with either of my game-guns. George, the automatic sixteen, please!"

(2) The game of Skeet, which has come from America, where it is a rage. It is controlled from two Victorian bathing-machines of different heights, forty yards apart; from these pigeons issue at frantic speeds and are shot at from each of seven stations marked in a semi-circle (as in clock-golf) between

the bathing-machines. A full round of Skeet is twenty birds, and consists of a single from each end taken from each of the seven stations, and of a pair taken from each of three stations, the second bird of the pair being released on the report of the shot of the first. The line taken by the birds is constant. The game is great fun and excellent practice, but I need scarcely say that the difficulty of causing the prey the slightest discomfort is very nearly insurmountable.

At least, I came away with the feeling that clay-bustard shooting would be much easier.

ERIC.

At the Pictures

ROBERT TAYLOR, OXONIAN

THERE is, in *A Yank at Oxford*, a rather perplexing repetition of the motive of self-sacrifice; there are, I hear from Oxford men, some inaccurate details, and the mobs of undergraduates on mischief bent have been trained to behave too much in unison; but taken as a whole, as it should be, it is an excellent picture and a credit to the proud phrase, "British made." And the balance has been curiously well preserved, for the visitor from the Wild West does not, as might perhaps have been expected, sweep the poor old place off its legs, but now and then is himself swept, or approximately so. But whether there is going to be any retaliation—whether an English youth, taciturn and inferior of complex, will be shown at an American university—remains to be seen.

Not only is *A Yank at Oxford* a good entertainment in itself, but it is good in its acting. I can remember no British-made film, except perhaps *The Private Life of Henry VIII.*, where so much all-round ability has been obtained. ROBERT TAYLOR can be stated at once, at any rate so far as my opinion is concerned, to be all that he has been cracked up to be. He is easy to look at and easy to listen to and, as *Lee Sheridan*, he acts uncommonly well. I should not myself have drawn any parallels with RUDOLF VALENTINO; but the Fair have done so, and the matter must be adjusted between the Fair and their latest hero or between ROBERT TAYLOR and the Fair. Of his qualities there can be no doubt: I am certain that it is the personality of ROBERT TAYLOR rather than any Oxford lure that has been crowding the Empire five times a day.

As the story progresses and character is added to character, the film becomes a reunion of old friends. Almost at once we hear the deep incisive tones of LIONEL BARRYMORE as *Lee Sheridan's* father. In train from Paddington to Oxford who should be sitting next to *Lee* (carrying, by the way, strangely little luggage) but MORTON SELTEN? When we reach Cardinal College who should be the *Dean* but EDMUND GWENN, and who should be *Lee's* scout but EDWARD RIGBY, and who should be his tutor but CHARLES V.

FRANCE? And so it goes on. They all, it is true, have too little to do; but that can't be helped, for, as it is, *A Yank at Oxford* plays for almost two hours, and their contributions are right. Yet think of MORTON SELTEN



J.M.D.W.

DEAN APPEAL

Dean of Cardinal . . . EDMUND GWENN
Elsa Craddock . . . VIVIEN LEIGH

being cut down to two minutes! That richness and ripeness!

The devoted Durbinites who flock to DEANNA's new film, *Mad about Music*, will have soon to come to some arrangement with their divinity's producers to

get her age fixed. I seem to remember that in DEANNA's preceding picture, *One Hundred Men and a Girl*, she was sixteen and that the tenderness of these years contrasted with a mature voice has been much and usefully commented upon. But in *Mad about Music*, although her voice continues to be mature and her gay features are very charmingly developed, her age, constantly emphasised, is only fourteen. Something must be done and done quickly or we shall throng to her next picture armed with cradles. Personally I should now allow her to grow up. In fact throughout the greater part of *Mad about Music* I was expecting her to qualify for the real movie-star class and to marry HERBERT MARSHALL. But no. To my intense astonishment, after a career as the humorous confirmed-English-bachelor-of-the-screen, he pairs off at the very end with DEANNA's mother, a real movie-star with matrimonial intentions, whose manager, for the sake of the most desirable brand of publicity, has been denying that she had a child at all, and least of all a child of fourteen.

I doubt if *Mad about Music* will be as popular as *One Hundred Men and a Girl*, but it will serve. It has good tunes, one a particularly attractive song with some whistled bars in it which ought to find its way into dance-orchestras and crowd out some of the dismal that now dominate the floor; and it has a pleasant account by HERBERT MARSHALL of the adventures and perils of a jungle where he had never been; and it has ARTHUR TREACHER, who, as *Tripp*, continues to extract fun from another of his predestined representations of an English valet.

One peculiarity of *Mad about Music* that I noticed is the length of time that elapses between the start of the film and the arrival of the principal male character. DEANNA we see very quickly, but HERBERT MARSHALL is so long in appearing that we begin to wonder if he has not been left out altogether. That would be an innovation indeed. E. V. L.

Without Comment

"The Nazi Party in Upper Austria has presented to Herr Hitler a prehistoric stone club as a symbol of the absorption of Austria by the Reich."—*The Times*.

"Around her neck was a father boa."—*From a serial story*.
Does the mother boa know?



"DAD"-NAPPING

Gloria Harkinson . . . DEANNA DURBIN
Richard Todd . . . HERBERT MARSHALL
Tripps . . . ARTHUR TREACHER

Letters to Officialdom

XIV. Re Stamps

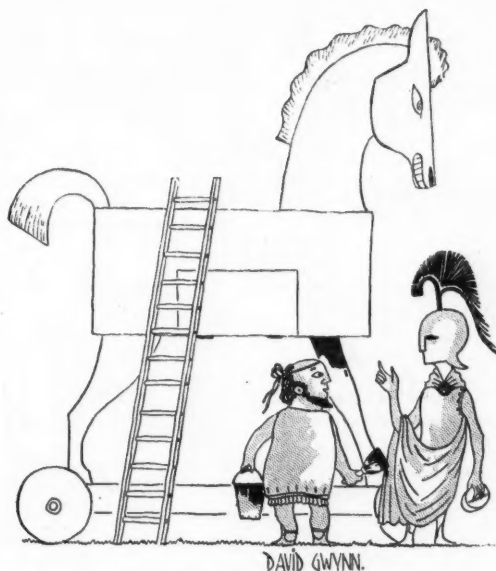
To the Foreign Secretary, The Foreign Office, Downing Street, London, S.W.1

DEAR SIR,—I expect your first reaction on receiving this letter will be to wonder why I am writing to you and not to the Post Office or one of the established philatelists, about foreign stamps. Indeed, Sir, unless you collect stamps yourself you will probably not understand why the matter is of such importance to me. But it is important, I assure you, and because the reasons are political the Post Office, being a civil institution, cannot help me, while my philatelist, being a Commotionalist, cannot even grasp them. (A Commotionalist, I understand, is the parliamentary term for a Communist-International-Socialist.)

What I wish to know is this—and I would point my request by mentioning that we philatelists are not more interested in stamps of different lands and values than we are in stamps that differ (though they be apparently the same) by reason of some freakish circumstance, such as a misprint or a subtle variation in the colour of the perforation.

Can you tell me, therefore, to begin with, if the Austrian stamps are to be changed in consequence of the *Anschluss*, and, if so, will they (as is being rumoured in stamp-collecting circles) bear Herr HITLER's portrait? This is of considerable importance to philatelists, and I think also of interest politically, because it is not generally known that when Herr HITLER became Chancellor a limited edition of stamps embellished with his portrait (face value, 10 pfennig) was issued and then hurriedly withdrawn, owing to the fact that on being postmarked some of them made it appear that the Chancellor had a black face, others a black eye, others a long black beard, and others that he had shaved only one side of his face. In a few cases the postmark obscured the olive-branch stuck in Herr HITLER's hair and made it look like a straw.

These unfortunate results were held to be prejudicial to the FÜHRER's prestige, though Dr. GOEBBELS, it is said, ingeniously used them for propaganda purposes by stating in his newspaper, *Der Blumenrot*, that the FÜHRER had sustained the black eye in repulsing a dastardly attack launched against him by an old Jew on crutches. What particularly annoyed Dr. GOEBBELS was that the lame man had used his crutches, and to allay the apprehension of the German nation the



"IF YOU THINK ANYONE WILL FALL FOR THAT YOU MUST BE CRAZY!"

crutches of all lame men were immediately confiscated. Pure Aryans, however, were allowed to use rubber-tipped walking-sticks instead.

As for the black beard and unshaven appearance with which Herr HITLER had been credited, Dr. GOEBBELS, in a broadcast, explained them savagely as testimonies to the demoralising inefficiency of a cheap Russian safety-razor which was then flooding the German market. The FÜHRER, with characteristic self-sacrifice, had used one to demonstrate how useless it was.

The FÜHRER's apparently black face, however, was very much more difficult to explain, and Dr. GOEBBELS in his desperation resorted to the truth but qualified it, through force of habit, by an inexactitude. He said that the postmark had caused it, but that the stamp had been viciously and of set purpose postmarked in that way by a Communist clerk. A perfectly innocent clerk was then rounded up and has been kept ever since in a concentration camp, scrubbing the postmarks off all German stamps so that they can be used again. This is one of the economies that have helped so vastly in the reconstruction of the German Reich.

Nearly all these stamps were eventually traced and burnt by the Gestapo, but a few are still extant, and the most valuable of the lot is one depicting Herr HITLER with two black eyes. This belongs to someone who, though not a

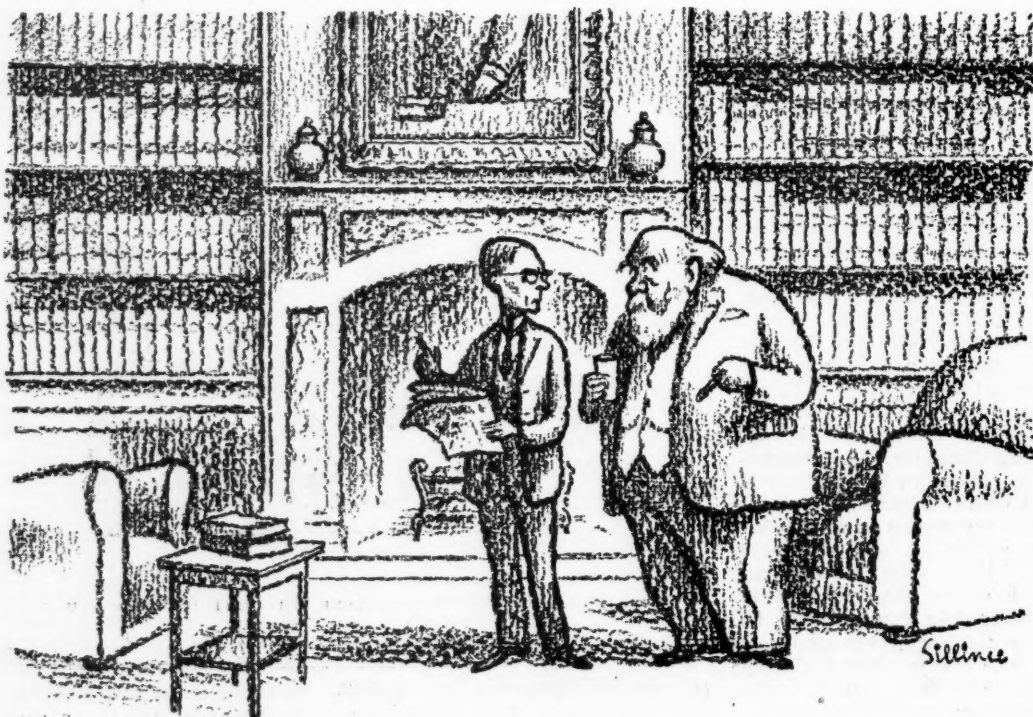
collector, has refused a bid of two hundred pounds for it. His name is Cohen.

You can imagine, therefore, the excitement prevailing among philatelists at the present time; the feverish urge to know whether or not new Austrian stamps bearing Herr HITLER's portrait will be issued. If they are, will the FÜHRER be represented full-face or in profile? My philatelist tells me that very high prices will be paid by stamp-collectors for a profile stamp having the round postmark partly continuous with the FÜHRER's nose, as if he were balancing a ball on it. Equally high prices will be paid for an Austrian stamp with the postmark on top of and touching the FÜHRER's head, as if (said my philatelist) he were a football-player. On the other hand, the complete obliteration of the FÜHRER's image will be of little or no interest, though of course I am speaking only from the stamp-collector's point of view.

Perhaps you would be good enough to let me know as soon as possible what form the new Austrian stamps will take?

Yours faithfully,
CHAS. CURSETT.

P.S.—The most remarkable of all, and one that we philatelists scarcely dare hope for, would be Herr HITLER represented as facing towards the Right with the postmark giving the effect of a halo round his head.



"AT LAST WE HAVE WARNED THE WORLD OF OUR TERRIFYING MIGHT."

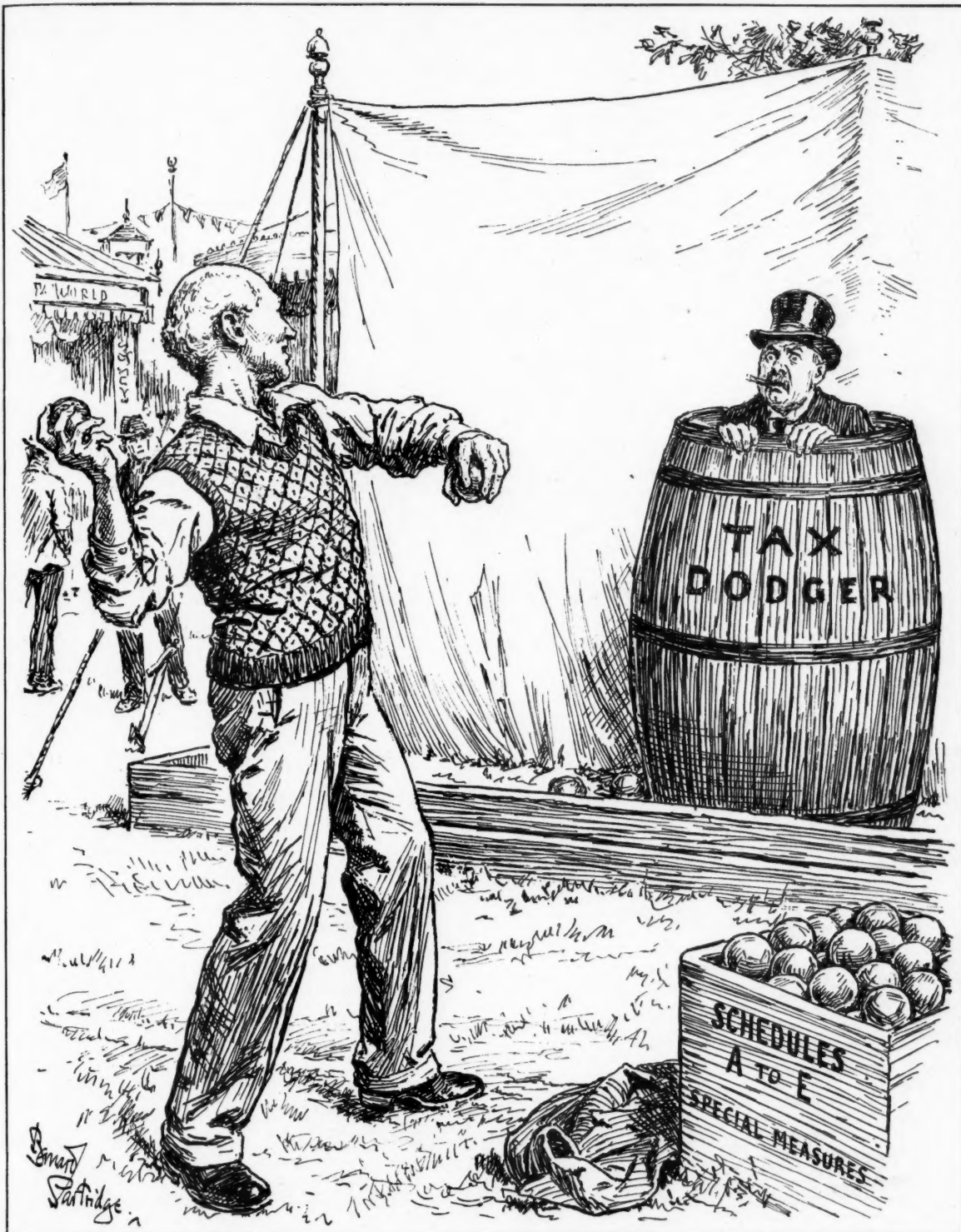
Strangers

"AGED stranger in the train,
Telling me it looks like rain,
Would this be your dressing-case
Which has landed on my face?
No, the window doesn't shut.
Please assist me with this smut.
Yes, the knob is turned to HOT,
Heaven help us when it's not.
Tell me, have I been asleep?
I don't recognise that sheep.
Tell me, have I gone too far?
Anything but who you are."

"Jolly stranger in Paul Jones,
With your hair in telephones,
Tell me if your home is near;
Yell it or I will not hear.
Had I better hold your hand
While we're going by the band?
Would it be correct to turn
When we reach this potted fern?
Tell me that you didn't know
I was standing on your toe.
Tell me I was not to blame;
Anything except your name."

"Tell me, stranger on the ship,
Why I ever took this trip.
Stranger at the cricket-match,
Wake me if you see a catch.
Loving strangers on the log,
Have you lost a little dog?
Stranger, leaning on your plough,
Were you looking for a cow?
Stranger propped against the bar,
What a bore these budgets are.
I began in front of you,
Stupid stranger in the queue."

"Lovely stranger eating brill
Delicately in the grill,
Why, I wonder, won't it do
For me to make a joke to you;
If we'd only been on board,
Think of how you might have roared,
Fancy how you might have laughed
On a switchback or a raft.
How you might have been unbent
If we'd had an accident.
Why must luncheon *à la carte*
Keep us ruthlessly apart?"



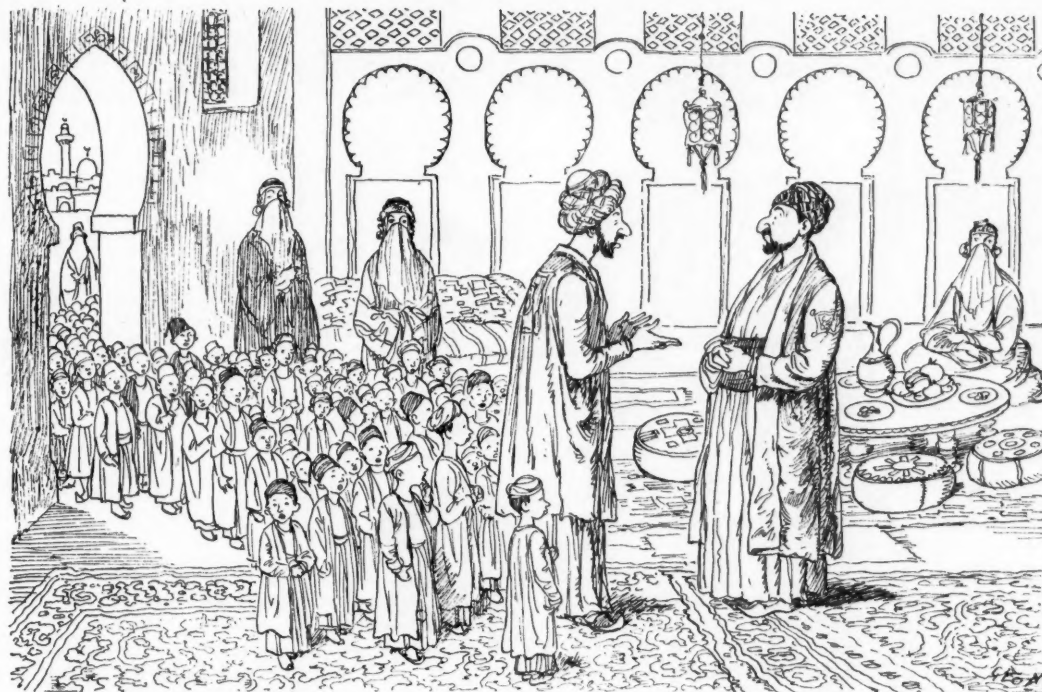
FAIR GAME

Sir John Simon. "Watch me get him this time!"

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"I FELT SURE YOU WOULDN'T MIND IF I BROUGHT THE KIDDIES."

My Gift

I DON'T wish to seem to boast about it—it is simply a gift that I happen to possess—but I have always been a very good judge of character. I can size a man up in a twinkling. I know immediately if he is honest. Even before he begins to talk I can tell if he is going to speak the truth. I go by the eyes largely. The eyes and the general expression of the face. I don't, as I say, wish to boast about this gift of mine—I have it and there it is—but I must admit it comes in very handy at times.

For instance, I was driving alone down the Great North Road some time ago when I noticed a man in a blue mackintosh walking rather wearily along the footpath. Something about him struck a sympathetic chord in me. "Here is a fellow-being," I said to myself, "less fortunate than myself. Perhaps I can be of service to him." So I stopped the car.

Of course if he'd waved or signalled me to stop I should have assumed him to be a bandit or a bounder and driven on. (Because I know there are men who make a living by cadging lifts and then

swindling the mugs who befriend them.) But he hadn't. He'd made no sign at all, merely glancing over his shoulder with a look of mute appeal. So after looking at his eyes and the general expression of his face to see if he were to be trusted I offered him a lift and he got in.

His gratitude was touching. He was a sailor, it seemed, and he'd missed his ship in Glasgow and was walking to Southampton.

"It's a long walk," I said conversationally, "from Glasgow to Southampton, my man."

"It is indeed," he said in his rich seafaring voice, "but I had no alternative. No money, you see—we sailors don't take money with us when we go aboard—and I'm not the kind of man who would ever ask for a lift."

"Couldn't you have borrowed some from your company's agents in Glasgow?" I inquired.

He had an answer to this one; I just forget what it was but I know it was entirely satisfactory. In fact he had an answer to everything, and as the journey proceeded I realised that my judgment had been as sound as ever. He told his tale with conviction, like a man who has nothing to fear from his conscience.

He suggested that I should take him as far as St. Albans—a distance of about a hundred miles, after which he would branch off in a westerly direction, continuing the journey on foot; and I agreed gladly.

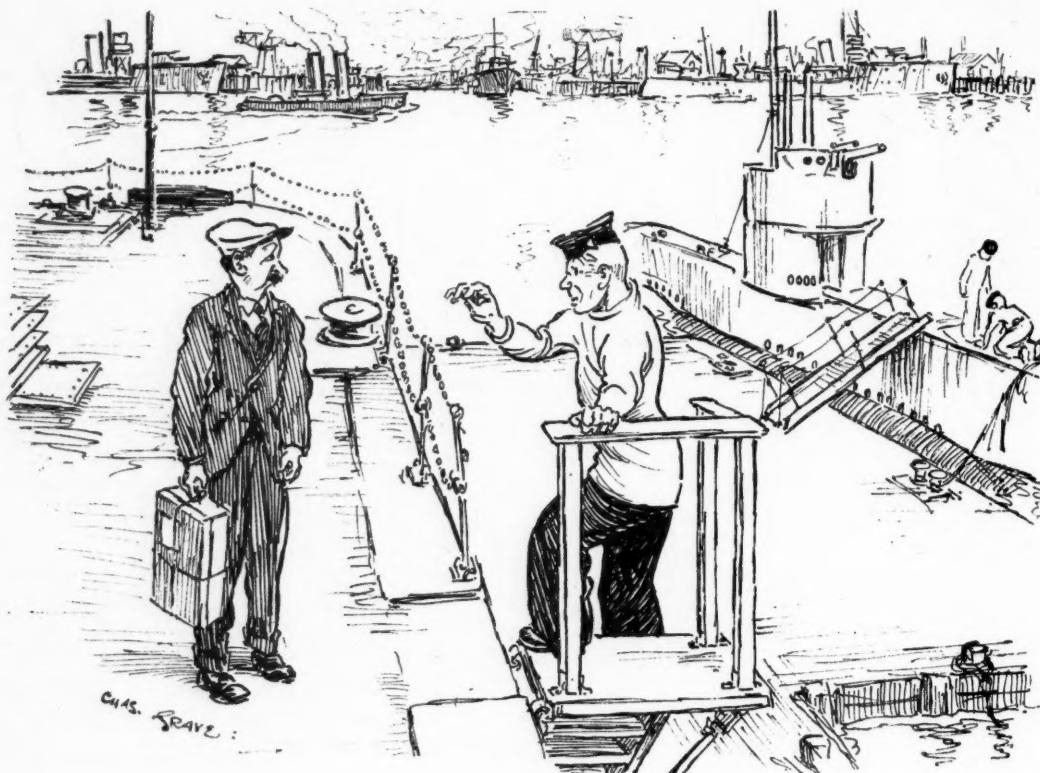
He turned out to be an interesting talker. He had just concluded a rather startling narrative about his early life at sea (which I should have found difficult to believe had it not been for the fact that, having sized him up, I knew my man) when a large number of cars came sweeping round a bend, passing and repassing each other as they do on the Great North Road, and I was compelled to apply the brakes rather hurriedly.

"Did you notice that?" inquired my passenger. "When you applied the brakes I pressed my feet hard against the floor-board. Now, why was that?"

"I have no idea, my man," I said chattily. "Why was it?"

"Because I have a car of my own," said the sailorman—"a thirty-horse-power Slink. I keep it at my home in Southampton. It is because I am so accustomed to driving that I pressed my feet hard against the floor-board."

I was rather surprised. One didn't expect a simple seafaring soul like this to run a thirty-horse-power Slink, but



"AN' WOT DO *YOU* DO ON BOARD?"
 "I 'OLDS 'ER NOSE WHEN SHE DIVES."

these reflex actions of the feet which he had described *proved*, if proof were needed, that he was telling the truth. I was even more sympathetic than before. The walk from Glasgow to Southampton is a much more objectionable thing for a man with a thirty-horse-power Slink than for a man accustomed to such walks.

"I have quite a large house at Southampton," he continued. "You must come and stay some time."

When we stopped for petrol he wrote his address on the back of an old envelope I gave him and I handed him my card. I dropped the "My man" after that.

"I am joining another ship at Southampton and going out to Jamaica, but I shall be back in about two months' time. You must let me bring you a parrot. I can easily send it to you by passenger-train when I come ashore."

"I'd love a parrot," I said; "and I shall be only too pleased to pay for it."

"There will be no question of payment," he said. "One good turn deserves another."

You see how matey the relationship had become by this time.

When we parted at St. Albans he happened to mention that after he'd finished the packet of cigarettes he had in his hand he'd be a non-smoker.

"Indeed?" I said understandingly. "Turning over a new leaf?"

"You can't buy cigarettes without money," he said.

I was much moved and immediately offered to lend him some. He replied that if only he had a couple of pounds he could get a bus home. He didn't ask me to lend him it, you notice; he was not the sort of man who would ever do that. But he accepted the money gratefully, promising to send it back to me in the morning. There was a gleam of happiness in his eyes as he contemplated my simple act of good fellowship. It was a pleasure to help such a man.

* * * * *

That was six months ago. I have not received the two pounds or the parrot yet, and a letter I wrote to the address he gave me was returned this

morning by the post-office officials marked "Address not known."

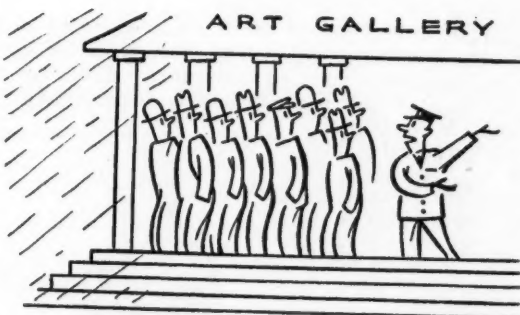
I must say I was rather astonished at first. I even wondered for a moment if my summing-up of the man's character had been unsound. Then I found the old envelope on which he'd written his address, and examined the handwriting. It was the handwriting of an honest man.

It is always gratifying to have one's judgment confirmed in this way.

Mr. Punch on Tour

The Exhibition of the original work of Modern "Punch" Artists will be on view at the Museum and Art Gallery, Reading, from April 30th to May 28th, and later at Blyth, Darlington and Middlesbrough.

Invitations to visit the Exhibition at Reading will be gladly sent to readers if they apply to the Secretary, *Punch* Office, Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.



DAVID
LANGDON

At the Play

"POWER AND GLORY" (SAVOY)

MR. OSCAR HOMOLKA plays two sharply-contrasted parts in the new CAPEK play, *Power and Glory*. He is *Dr. Galen*, gentle, self-effacing but immovable in following his conscience. He is also the *Marshal*, the leader and Dictator, the resolute man of action, proceeding from murky motives to violent ends. The contrast is not subtle, the colours used are primary colours, and if the same actor plays both parts it is not merely to display his virtuosity and power, marked and impressive though that is, but to underline the dramatist's meaning. There is in all men the dualism, and *Galen* and the *Marshal* are *Jekyll* and *Hyde*. *Galen* heals and blesses and is good, the *Marshal* destroys and corrupts and is evil.

The world is afflicted with an incurable plague which attacks everyone over fifty. *Galen* alone can cure it, and *Galen* fixes his fee at nothing less than this—that all the governments shall vow themselves to peace, otherwise he will keep his treatment a secret and only heal the poor. The dramatist is asking whether organised medical science could not, as other syndicalists have tried to do, put pressure on mankind to ensure good behaviour. But he propounds his question in a setting which is much too actual for his purpose. The very success of the portraiture, for example, of *Professor Sigelius* (MR. FELIX AYLMEYER), who embodies the medical profession as it bows down in the House of Rimmon, makes us expect to see poor *Dr. Galen* outwitted.

We know that a doctor with a cure for a universal deadly plague would not be allowed to withhold it from the world by stipulating for guarantees of universal peace; we know that he could not practise in a slum, giving injections to a miscellaneous queue of outpatients, without losing his secret. Consequently we find the numerous realistic scenes—there are a dozen in all—in clinics and waiting-rooms calling for action on a lower, more realistic plane,

for a story to be called "*Dr. Galen's Secret*" and to unfold itself as a battle for a formula. It could not be, for this is a play by KAREL CAPEK, a playwright whose eyes keep watch on man's

members of an ordinary family, scenes which reproduce what the author stated so much more memorably in that superb Second Act of *The Insect Play*. The crickets there have their counterparts in the family of the munition-worker here. But his new play, while full of separate good things, suffers all the time because the dramatist has apparently never made up his mind either completely to leave the kingdom of symbolic fantasy where he reigns, or to remain in it and to make the political and international issues of the hour come to him and accept re-fashioning at his hands for his dramatic purposes. He presents something which is an unsatisfying mixture, full of scenes like that between an armament king (MR. C. V. FRANCE) and *Dr. Galen*, in which what would be moving and interesting is marred by the incredible character of the whole situation.

MR. HOMOLKA, who has little to do as *Dr. Galen* beyond affirming and reaffirming the same attitude of gentle obstinacy, has much more movement and scope as the *Marshal*. The character of the *Marshal* is denied any final integrity by the dramatist, but MR. HOMOLKA invests it with a force and depth which keep alive the later scenes of the play.

He is faced with the difficulty that the dramatist has not drawn the *Marshal*, as he has *Dr. Galen*, as the embodiment of an attitude; because the man of action is an opportunist, only convinced fundamentally of one thing, that he is essential, he collapses at the crisis. That he should collapse in vain is in keeping with KAREL CAPEK's sombre appraisal of human life; but the side of life which the *Marshal* embodies does not show, in history, any such inner weakness or tendency to desert its governing ideas. If it was desired to show how much one sincere idealist, advantageously placed, could achieve, the opposition should not have been fitted out with so much accidental inner weakness. This *Marshal*, in short, belongs, like *Dr. Sigelius* in MR. AYLMEYER's admirable portrayal, to another (unwritten) play, of action, plot and counter-plot.

D. W.



THE G.P. AND THE CLINIC-CONSCIOUS PROFESSOR

Dr. Galen MR. OSCAR HOMOLKA
Professor Sigelius MR. FELIX AYLMEYER

mortality and whose interest is in types and symbols.

There are scenes showing the cold hearts and selfish preoccupations of the



A HANDSHAKE THAT SHOOK A COUNTRY

Baron Krug MR. C. V. FRANCE
Marshal MR. OSCAR HOMOLKA

"POISON PEN" (SHAFTESBURY)

This uneven but powerful play, which has come into town from the Embassy, is about that curse of the countryside, the anonymous letter. It takes the case of a village where for a year the posts have carried a campaign of slanderous and home-wrecking suggestion, it shows the ease with which suspicion can go to tragic lengths, and finally, having identified the writer of the letters, it offers a terrible demonstration of the state of mind from which they spring.

As always with a play which depends for part of its interest on "Who did it?" speculations, the critic feels that if he can he should keep the author's secret; but here discretion must be abandoned not only because the best of the play comes after the disclosure that *Miss Rainrider*, the Rector's sister, is the culprit, but because unless one acknowledges this fact it is impossible to do justice to the performance of Miss MARGARET YARDE, which is a *tour de force* in the interpretation of the kind of insanity which allows its victims a protective façade of normality.

Brutal and obscene, the letters have come to the happiest couples in the district, and have been well enough informed to fan innocent jealousies into open violence. At first nothing much had been said, but now, after a year, the village is losing its nerve. As often happens in these cases, public opinion has fastened the guilt on to the wrong person, and nothing which the *Rev. John Rainrider* can tell his flock shakes the general conviction that a lonely little seamstress is to blame. Her work takes her from house to house; she is by nature silent, and, the village having made up its mind, it hounds her as unmercifully as any village can.

The Sunday morning on which the *Squire* calls in the police is by chance that on which she hangs herself from the bell-rope of the church as Matins are beginning, and from then we watch from inside the Rectory as the case develops. We see one of the letters delivered to the *fiancé* of the Rector's daughter, and applaud the young man's strength of mind in removing her to London for immediate marriage. We hear of another letter which has inspired a doting husband to suicide. We

learn from the police that their meagre clues all indicate a middle-aged woman of some education. And all the time we are telling ourselves that nobody as buxom and motherly as *Miss Rain-*



HIGH LIFE AT THE RECTORY

Colonel Cashelton, D.S.O., J.P. . . . MR. GEORGE WRAY
Mrs. Colclough MISS BEATRIX FIELDEN-KAYE

rider, to whom the village brings its troubles and the Church turns for support, could ever play the fiend.

A too-hastily improvised lie and a number seven written in her house-

keeping book give her away, and suddenly before her horror-stricken brother her pose of heartiness crumbles horribly into the raving of a maniac with a grudge against the world.

FREUD would have a word for her. She has badly missed a husband and she has badly missed children, and for years and years repressions have been eating into her sanity.

After this one great outburst, a storm which leaves her brother dazed, she goes giggling upstairs and kills herself. It is a terrible scene, but Miss YARDE invests it with unforgettable force, as much when *Miss Rainrider* is cringing before her brother's accusations, still half-aware of what she has done, as when she is screaming her indictment of Society.

Unfortunately the background to this remarkable performance falls rather noticeably short of it, both in the quality of the acting and of the dialogue. The village hierarchy lacks the authentic note. In a scene after dinner at the Rectory the *Inspector's* wife, who might have been expected to be a trifle shy in the presence of the nobles, treats the party to a regular music-hall monologue (which Miss BEATRIX FIELDEN-KAYE handles well, but, through no fault of hers, in the wrong place). The *Squire* is too much a caricature of the stage squire of melodrama, and to a lesser degree his wife suffers from the same complaint. And the *Inspector* moves through the story like some grave automaton of retribution, without displaying, so far as I could see, any human emotion whatever.

As the Rector, Mr. WALTER FITZGERALD is sometimes entirely convincing and at others somewhat overwhelmed by the demands of a part which involves the utterance of pachydermatous platitudes while forbidding the use of any saving irony. (And do Rectors ever pump parishioners in the vestry for the benefit of other parishioners hidden behind curtains?) Miss CICELY EVE and Mr. JACK ALLEN are pleasantly romantic, and as a Welsh expert in handwriting, Mr. RODDY HUGHES contributes the surest humour of the play. ERIC.

Remember This at Dances

"Miss 1938 has hands and feet three or four times larger than her great-grandmother's."

Daily Paper.



SYMPTOMS OF WRITER'S CRAMP

Rev. John Rainrider . . . MR. WALTER FITZGERALD
Phryne Rainrider . . . MISS MARGARET YARDE



"OW CUM OI TO EVER LET THAT GOAL THROUGH AGIN TUNBERSCOMBE IN '93?"

Diplomatic Disappearances

(À la Franco-Russe)

I CLOSED my umbrella. I shook the snow out of my moustaches and entered the Kremlin.

A commissar led me straight in.

His Potency sat with his back to the window behind a large desk. A Persian cat dozed at his feet and he was dressed in a pair of corduroy breeches.

I waited respectfully a few moments while he finished reorganising the heavy industries, made a few alterations to the new Constitution and signed the death-warrants of a batch of Generals who had exceeded the age-limit.

At length he consented to raise his head and look at me.

"Iosif Katsitch," he said, "you will leave for France by the next boat and you will bring me back one dozen tins of *pâté de foie gras*, two Camembert cheeses and our accredited Minister Plenipotentiary."

I bowed and left the room.

A week later I was in Paris.

I called at the Embassy and sent in my card to the Minister Plenipotentiary's wife. I was ushered into her private boudoir and after a short interval Madame Slinkoff made her appearance. She greeted me very graciously and while we sat drinking cups of tea I explained to her the purpose of my visit.

"Madame Slinkoff," I said, "would you like to get rid of your husband?"

She considered the proposition for a few moments.

"No, I don't think so," she said at last. "He is doing very well as a diplomat and is earning quite a good salary, and as he gives me his pay-envelope at the end of each week I have really nothing to complain about."

"The Kremlin," I replied severely, "has been trying to recall him for months, but he refuses to go. It has therefore become necessary to abduct him. I thought as you are his wife you might be able to assist me."

Madame Slinkoff, lost in thought, rose from her chair and paced to and fro across the room.

"But why should I help you to abduct my husband?" she said. "I cannot see what advantage it would be to me."

I took out a cheque for two million roubles and gave it to her. She examined the signature carefully through a magnifying-glass and seemed satisfied that it was authentic.

"Very well," she said. "If things have gone as far as this then it would be merely churlish on my part to refuse. What is it you wish me to do?"

I told her.

"I have a cargo-boat waiting at Calais," I said. "Could you abduct your husband and bring him to me, say, to-morrow morning at ten o'clock?"

"Yes," she said. "I think I could probably manage it."

I thanked her and took my leave.

The next morning, punctually at five minutes to ten, Madame Slinkoff drove up to the quayside in a plain van. She took out a large and bulky parcel wrapped up in brown-paper and handed it to me.

"Here is my husband," she said.

I attached him to the winch-hook and lowered him into the hold.

"And my receipt?" asked Madame Slinkoff.

I wrote out a receipt: "One Minister Plenipotentiary. Net weight, 194 kilos. Gross weight, 203 kilos. Value, nil."

"Is that all right?" I asked.

"Yes," said Madame Slinkoff.

She put the receipt in her purse; she let in the clutch of her plain van and disappeared in a cloud of dust and petrol-fumes in the direction of Paris.

Eight days later I was emptying the slush out of my goloshes in front of the Kremlin. I was admitted at once. As I entered the apartment His Potency hurriedly crumpled up a piece of paper he was busy working on. It was *The Times* crossword-puzzle. He asked me whether I had seen what it was.

"No," I said.

He looked relieved.

"It was a very important state document," he explained.

I don't believe it.

"And were you successful?" he inquired.

"Yes," I said. "I have brought the things with me."

I opened my bag and took out the groceries and the Minister Plenipotentiary. I set the latter on his feet on the floor and brushed some of the dust off his frock-coat. I felt rather proud of him.

His Potency examined him with a thoughtful frown.

"Turn round," he said.

The diplomat turned round.

"Turn round again," he said.

The diplomat turned round again.

His Potency shook his head.

"That's not my Minister Plenipotentiary," he said.

I almost fainted.

"Whose is he then?" I asked, aghast.

His Potency leaned forward and took out a pawn-ticket from one of the diplomat's pockets. He looked at the name on it.

"Bah!" he exclaimed disgustedly.

"He's a mere consul; he belongs to one of the small buffer states."

He rang a bell. A commissar came in.

"Dispatch this diplomat to the Lost Property Office at Geneva," he said.

The commissar took away the diplomat and dispatched him.

His Potency beetled his eyebrows at me.

"And the cheque for two million roubles?" he asked.

I trembled from head to foot.

"I gave it to Madame Slinkoff," I said.

His Potency grew purple. He pressed another bell. Another commissar came in.

"Liquidate him," he said.

The commissar liquidated me.

I froze with terror.

"Liquidate him again," said His Potency.

I was liquidated again.

"Pour him into a saucer and give him to the cat," said His Potency.

I was poured into a saucer and given to the cat.

I began to grow discontented with the régime. I began to lose faith in

dialectical materialism, KARL MARX and the Soviet Union. I began to disappear gradually off the plate.

At length the saucer was quite clean; the cat licked the last drop of me off his whiskers.

I deviated into Trotskyism.

An L.E.G.

O LOVELY L.C. O.N.,
Since all I.O. to thee,
X.P.D.N.C. bids me
To write this L.E.G.

What words can ere be U.Z.
What F.E.G. convey
The X.L.N.C. of your form
Now ravaged by D.K.?

Though filling all with N.V.
No N.M.E. U. knew.
I C thy memory honoured
With I.V. and with U.

O N.E. hour is M.T.
My L.C., without thee,
Yet love's X.S. could not prevail
'Gainst death's Q.P.D.T.



"AND THIS IS SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS."



"THE NAME IS MACDOUGALL, WITH A SMALL 'D.'"

Nature in the Raw

"TINY ginger kitten blue eyes very cheap arriving hopefully nine o'clock train."

One is willing enough to suppose that messages of greater significance have flashed along the telegraph-wires in their day, but not many, surely, of greater appeal?

One knew of course what Laura had done.

Having been asked to find and despatch a responsible cat, warranted to deal with mice and even rats, white for choice, she had idiotically fallen a victim to some wholly unsuitable kitten and had—not without skill—framed the announcement of its

arrival in such a way that it became a moral impossibility to refuse it.

Priscilla, indeed, went under without a struggle after a single reading of the telegram.

"The *tiny* thing!" she moaned, and screwed up her eyes and looked down at her finger and thumb, between which she indicated an imaginary object of some eighth-of-an-inch at the outside.

"A combination of ginger-colour and blue eyes is rather engaging," Uncle Egbert admitted—and one knew that only the manly reticence of an Englishman prevented him from saying a good deal more.

Aunt Emma shook her head from side to side and wore exactly the kind of smile that film-mothers wear whilst tears are pouring down their faces.

(Aunt Emma's tears were not pouring, or even welling, but the principle was the same.)

"Arriving hopefully," she quoted in a kind of mooring voice. "The little pet."

Aunt Emma, obviously, was sunk. Nothing could be hoped for from her except a suggestion—which indeed she made soon afterwards—that Uncle Egbert should get out the car and take her to the station to meet the nine o'clock train.

Charles only said thoughtfully that the telegram was a work of genius.

And I repeated to myself the words "*very cheap*" and felt how right he was.

There was something about a kitten that openly admitted itself to be only a very cheap one that completely undid me. A grand expensive kitten that would have looked down on us all one could have dealt with firmly, but this tiny blue-eyed affair, arriving hopefully and humbly aware of its own cheapness . . .

"It sounds *perfect*," I said madly.

It would be idle to relate how many of us went to meet it or the amount of time that some of us spent—and indeed still spend—in playing with it, offering it saucers of milk and disentangling it from the telephone-cord and the electric-light wires.

Laura—who arrived with it but was practically unnoticed by everybody—ran about after it with a camera.

"We *must* have its photograph while it's still little," she said desperately, and was very late for lunch, doubtless fearing that the kitten would have grown to unrecognisable dimensions between the minced chicken and the banana-fritters.

"Take it playing with my knitting," said Aunt Emma fatuously.

"Get it beside the dog," Uncle Egbert advised. "It would make a contrast. Always effective in a photograph."

Charles advised a dark background—I think because he wanted a photograph of the newly-tarred linhay—and Priscilla said the kitten looked like an angel when it stood up on its hind legs and boxed.

"I think that would be rather difficult to get," Laura said, looking worried. "It doesn't *stay* like that very long."

The trouble was that it didn't stay like anything very long. Laura spent hours stalking it.

"If I get a frightfully good one," she said hopefully, "I shall send it in for one of those snapshot competitions. You know—*England's Pets* or *Our Holiday Playmates* or something."



"COME OVER QUICK, ALBERT; D'YER WANT TO BE *NEWS*?"

Priscilla offered to put on a bathing-suit and be photographed with the kitten on a rock in Cornwall as a Bathing Belle.

I said more rationally that I thought something rather effective could be devised with the little creature sitting in a perfectly natural way washing its face; but unluckily when it sat washing its face it nearly always chose some spot utterly useless for photographic purposes, such as the inside of a bedroom slipper under a dressing-table in a dark corner.

"But that's absolutely the most perfect pose that ever was!" said Laura

ecstatically. "All I want now is to get it somewhere where I can take a snapshot. . . ."

I have not yet seen Laura's snapshots, but I understand that the kitten, ginger, blue-eyed and very cheap, was carried down in the bedroom slipper, which was then put on a little oak stool from the hall (for fear of wet grass) and the whole thing erected with infinite skill in the middle of the tennis-lawn.

The result, no doubt, will be a highly effective entry for *Our Pets* snapshot competition.

The suggested title I have already placed at the head of this article.

E. M. D.

"PERSONAL.

Would Opossum Poacher on Watson's property at Akatore kindly remove trap from the bull's nose?"

Advt. in "*Otago Daily Times*" (N.Z.).
Certainly. Hold him still.

"Mr. Herbert was called the 'jolliest man on board' by his fellow-passengers. Dressed in blue blazer and white flannels, Mr. Herbert was always on the move, bidding goow-ble to his numerous friends."—*Ceylon Paper*.

What a word!



"BUT YOU MUST FORCE ME TO BID, SIR."

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Relatively Easy

Of all the sciences physics, particularly in its more recent developments, would seem to be the hardest to make intelligible to the uninstructed. Yet Professor ALBERT EINSTEIN and Dr. LEOPOLD INFELD, attempting the apparently impossible, have achieved an astonishing measure of success. Not that *The Evolution of Physics* (CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 8/6) is to be comprehended by the meanest intelligence or to be read by him who runs; but, given a reasonable mental capacity and some will to attention and concentration, there is to be obtained from it, if not a complete view, at any rate a clear and coherent intimation of what the explorers of the universe have discovered or surmised since GALILEO from his turret threw down his daring challenge, through the advances of NEWTON and HELMHOLTZ and MAXWELL, to that already historic moment when the more famous of our present authors revealed his fundamental dissent from the masters whom he still reveres. This, then, is a story, with plot, development and dénouement; and its authors are justified in their claim that it has the excitement of a detective story. That it is fascinating to read and possible, given the conditions already postulated, to follow without bewilderment is due to the charm and lucidity of the writing; and those virtues may be traced to the writers' attitude towards their subject. For "science," they hold, "is not just a collection of laws, a catalogue of unrelated facts. It is a creation of the human mind."

The Later Stein

Many simple people think of GERTRUDE STEIN as the Queen of the Highbrows, who made good in America by writing a "crazy" autobiography about somebody else in sentences that you couldn't disentangle. But she has written other books, and the new one, *Everybody's Autobiography* (HEINEMANN, 12/6), is not really as alarming as all that. It's true it is rather tiring to read (physically tiring to the eyes, of course, not dry or heavy going); but behind those schoolgirlish sentences we get glimpses of a very shrewd old lady. Miss STEIN will not tell you anything about love, or wedlock, or *the heart*, but she has opinions, as wise old ladies have—very useful opinions—about lots of things that one is interested in, such as keeping servants, and PICASSO, and how to manipulate the French bureaucracy, and famous Americans, and poodles, and travelling in aeroplanes. Well, perhaps not about poodles, for she says, "Poodles are circus dogs they have no sense of home and no sense of being a dog, they do not realise danger nor ordinary life because in a circus there is no such thing," which as a generalisation seems flashy rather than sound. Miss STEIN has a wonderfully good time and thoroughly enjoys being a celebrity; she knows why she enjoys it and she makes you enjoy it too.

O Sweet Content!

Rural England, the Cinderella of our present economic system, is emphatically not the England of *High Meadows* (FABER AND FABER, 8/6), for the modest content and humble opulence to which hardworking smallholders naturally aspire is here given a secure lease of imaginary life. Mrs. ALISON UTLEY has evidently sought appropriate types to embody her love of the land and her legitimate aversion to educationalists; but her heroine, *Patty*, with *Patty's* schoolmaster wooer *Martin* and his wood-cutter rival *Jem* are all a trifle Arcadian and decorative in both their vices



"IS MY PETTICOAT SHOWING?"



CHIVALRY AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE

"Now, Cook, just you look here! Look at that piece of bacon I've just given your mistress! It's the thickest and worst cut I ever saw in my life!—and this piece I'm just going to take myself is only a little better!"

George du Maurier, April 25th, 1891.

and virtues. The underlying appeal is, however, so valid, so intensely felt and so picturesquely rendered that the tale moves gratefully from farmhouse to fair, from the sorrows of a distraint to the joys of a dance in a barn and through a whole series of rural toils interspersed with junketings that owe nothing to the tin-opener. *Patty's* mother, who is given an almost mystical sense of the contemplative and creative scope of a countrywoman's life, is a more memorable figure than her *Dolly Varden* daughter: for here the rural genius awaiting its long overdue reincarnation has almost succeeded in assuming flesh both comfortable and convincing.

Endor Up-to-Date

Those who believe in fortune-tellers and those who deplore their activities may be equally pleased with *Portrait in Shadows* (HURST AND BLACKETT, 7/6), by Mr. G. WYNDHAM

HASLETT, for the promises of a certain *Madame Clara* tempt *Isobel*, the heroine, to the brink of the blackest crime, and when she has given up all hope of making them come true she sees them fulfilled in an entirely unexpected manner. The book is curiously interesting, though most of the characters are unsympathetic and the action slight, and *Isobel* herself is a girl who, thwarted and lonely, longs only for wealth and power and seems, till the last page, when young passion overwhelms her, blind to the charms of kindness, home-life and love. Mr. HASLETT tells his story so seriously that the reader is apt to expect to find more in it than is actually there, but the atmosphere, unlike the English, is extremely good. The recapitulation of the creed of *Isobel's* saintly father seems unnecessary and out of place unless his daughter's conviction that she is appointed by Heaven to be wealthy or her rejection of temptation are connected with it, which is not made clear.

Peruvian Nights

The whirligig of time has endowed the greatest and most orthodox of Spanish dramatists with a descendant in the opposite camp. Señor V. G. CALDERON, whose *La Venganza del Condor* has been translated by Mr. RICHARD PHIBBS as *The White Llama* (GOLDEN COCKEREL PRESS, 8/6), is the son of a Peruvian President, a delegate to the League and an impassioned champion of the Peruvian peon. Where his seventeenth-century ancestor depicted the "true Dawn bearing the True Sun," he shows in a series of very short, very grisly, very picturesque and very Latin *contes* the total submergence of enlightenment. A popular gallant with forty-eight bastards pursues his career as a horse-thief; a cuckolded Don boils his faithless partner in a sugar-cauldron; an Indian convoy dopes its employer, opens one of his arteries, and leaves him for the condors to pick his eyes out. Anti-clerical rather than anti-Catholic, Señor CALDERON relates very charmingly the folk-version of Our Lord's birth somewhere "near Bolivia," and there are touches of poetic distinction among his most cynical yarns. But they are, on the whole, a sinister collection, and Mr. CLIFFORD WEBB's woodcuts reinforce their most tenebrous aspect.

First Person Singular

Mr. BRIAN MEREDITH calls his study of travel in mountains and snow in Canada and in Switzerland *Escape on Skis* (HURST AND BLACKETT, 12/6). Whatever the writer may have escaped it certainly was not Mr. BRIAN MEREDITH, for here is a book obsessed from cover to cover with his own personality—his infinitely considered trepidations and braveries, his admired superiority-inferiority complex, his butterfly love-making, his contempt, his yearnings, his well-scrutinised subconscious reactions. His very photographs seem to be intensified in a solution of his own aura. When he does for a moment write objectively he can pass in a sentence to ski-hiking in the heavenly fields of the high Alps or the Canadian Rockies and can carry one along with him there, but woefully too often he no sooner arrives than he betakes himself to the worship of his own shadow on the snow. Almost in spite of his resolution to avoid saying anything that might be useful, he conveys at times a living impression of mighty mountains that can be explored even in winter on skis, but he deliberately minimises technicalities and scorns geography in order to produce a travel book that shall be just an atmosphere, a beautiful haze of snow-dust in the sun, and in the haze one figure.

Alibis to Burn

If the murdered Egyptologist had used his dying breath to name his murderer instead of muttering "*Sersew wah wah wah wah*"—an important but distinctly cryptic clue

to the crime—a valuable life would have been saved; but on the other hand *Arrogant Alibi* (COLLINS, 7/6) would not have reached its ingenious and dramatic conclusion. Perhaps we should not have missed much. Mr. C. DALY KING's latest thriller will not appeal strongly to those who demand that their thrills shall be spiced with realism or that the murderers shall be the stuff of which murderers are made. The murder-story addicts will not mind that. All they ask is to be left guessing to the latest moment and then have the detective unfold his laboriously ingenious deductions while the murderer commits suicide or is hurried away to the calaboose. Mr. KING's detective obligingly does the former, but with what can only be regarded as a most undetective-like lack of horse-sense allows the final drama to develop into tragedy. Incidentally Mr. KING's Americans don't talk like Americans except when they remember to. For example, an officer of the New York homicide squad wouldn't call a dinner-jacket a dinner-jacket; he would call it a tuxedo. It is highly improbable in any case that he would own one.



"WELL, I'M NOT DISTURBING ANYONE NOW."

An Overdrawn Account

No one in recent fiction can more assiduously have courted a violent death than J. O. Railton, who was the manager of a bank and also a creature so vile that merely to call him a cad is by way of being a compliment. Several people—the "blurb" of *Death at the Bank* (CONSTABLE, 7/6) says "at least ten"—had sound reason for extinguishing Railton, so *Detective-Sergeant Dean* of Scotland Yard and the local police had an embarrassing number of candidates from whom to pick out the murderer. Mainly Mr. BASIL FRANCIS is content to follow a track that has been freely trodden by his fellow-craftsmen, but his deducer-in-chief was thoroughly competent and had the grace not to laugh openly at those who were far indeed from being perspicacious.

Duplicity

In *The Black Arrows* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON, 7/6) the scene is laid in Italy, where John Cowper of the British Secret Service was engaged in the task—to quote Mr. FRANCIS BEEDING's famous *Colonel Granby*—"of helping to make the world safe for dictators and for one dictator in particular." In all truth Cowper needed every bit of good luck that was going, for on arriving in Venice he was not given time to drink a cup of coffee at Florian's before a deliberate, but unskilful, attempt was made to poison him. Subsequently efforts of various kinds failed to deprive the dictator of his services, Mr. BEEDING being as clever in rescuing him from perilous positions as he is ingenious in thrusting him into them. A young American shows herself useful in befriending Cowper, but from first to last she is a vague and rather unsatisfactory figure.

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